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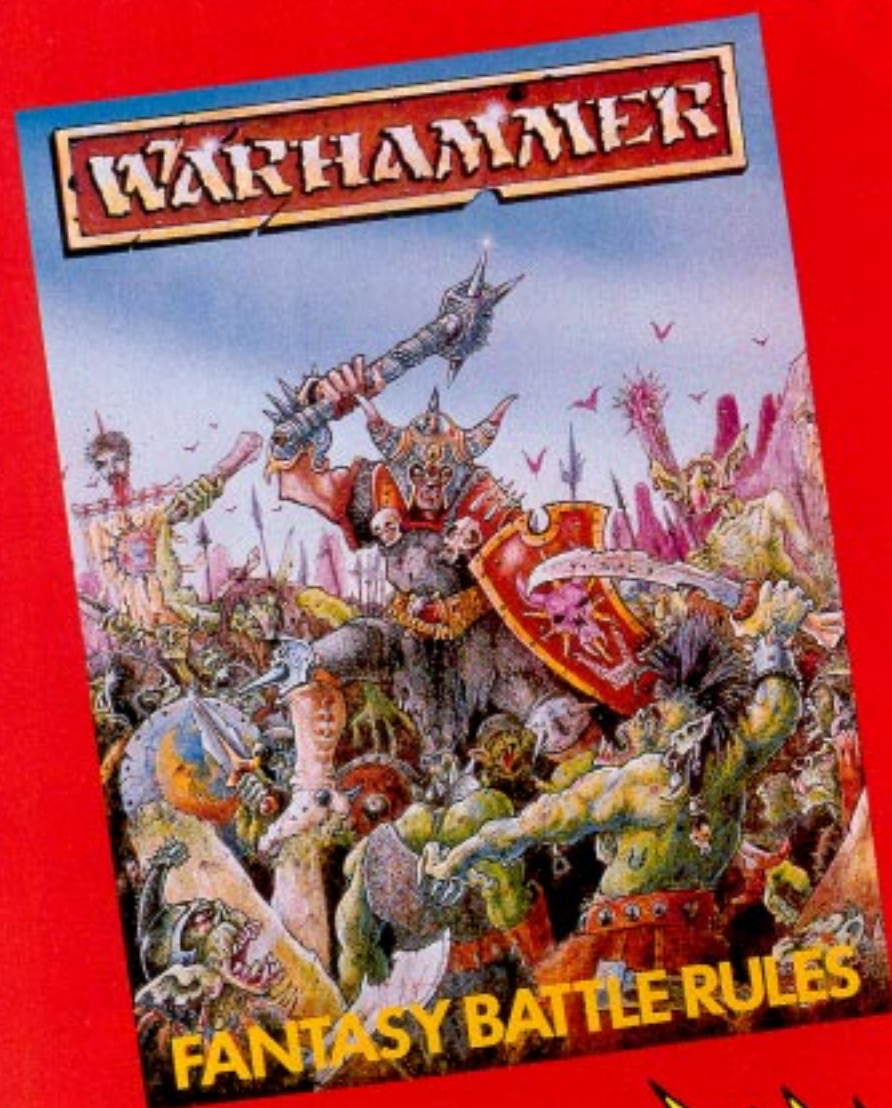


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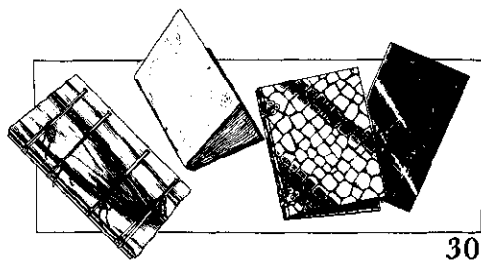
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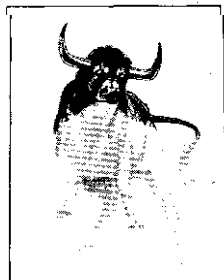
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COVER

"Music Lover" is Robin Wood's first cover painting for DRAGON® Magazine — an enchanting depiction of a kindly old silver dragon being swept off his, er, claws by a bard who apparently knows just which strings to pull. "Sorry it took so long," wrote Robin when she turned in the finished piece. "It usually doesn't, but there were all these scales, see."

Arcana update: Looking good

You're going to like *Unearthed Arcana*.
How can I be so sure? Gosh, I hoped you'd ask, because that gives me something to fill this month's column with.

You're going to like it because, finally, all of the official new material for the AD&D® game will be between one pair of covers. You won't have to subject your old issues of DRAGON® Magazine to any more wear and tear every time you want to roll up a barbarian or a cavalier

(Turn to page 35)

Letters

Don't blame Gary

To the readers:

Since the publication of Gary Gygax's column ("Demi-humans get a lift") in issue #95, we've received a sizable sampling of letters from readers who were alarmed or bewildered, or both, as a result of what they read. In this open letter, I'll try to set the record straight.

The article contained a mistake — a couple of passages that were not in the original manuscript. This Imperfect Editor misunderstood the intent of the new rules and, without bothering to check the Players Handbook against the new level limits given in the article, Yours Truly made one very large and very wrong assumption.

It first shows up in the fourth sentence of the second paragraph of text, the one that starts with the words "Double-classed or triple-classed demi-humans . . ." It surfaces again in the first sentence of the fourth paragraph, where it is said that the level-limit tables apply only to single-classed demi-humans.

Both of those sentences are just plain wrong — the tables do apply to multi-classed characters, and the level limits for single-classed characters are indeed two levels higher than what is shown on the tables in the article.

This revelation should help to clear up many of the particular questions raised by those of you who had trouble accepting the article at face value. Just pretend the "Double-classed and triple-classed" sentence isn't there, and change "single-classed" to "multi-classed" at the start of paragraph four.

Those corrections don't clear up every question that was posed to us, but they'll take care of the lion's share of the problems. We may address other questions in this column in the next issue or two; as for other questions that we don't get to, I'll optimistically suggest that they'll all be cleared up when the new rules on level limits are revised and included in *Unearthed Arcana*. (For more information on that project, see the column on the facing page.)

My apologies to anyone and everyone who was confused by the article — and especially to Gary, whose writing didn't deserve the kind of treatment I gave it. You can bet your best dice bag that this Embarrassed Editor will take much more care, and much less liberty, with Gary's manuscripts in the future.

Kim Mohan

If you've got it . . .

To the Editor:

Usually, I do not read DRAGON Magazine. I find the dragons with which one must cope in the real world to be far more satisfying to slay than anything that can be invented in the artificial worlds of fantasy. However, an article entitled "How taxes take their toll" in your March issue (#95) was called to my attention, and I have read it with much delight. In my opinion, the whole article is a masterpiece of gentle satire, and it would be worth reading by a wider clientele than

just those who usually browse through your pages.

The real reason I am writing you is that there is a mistake in diction in "How taxes take their toll" that needs to be called to your attention. I realize there may have been something lost in translation from Feldren-ese into English-American. I have done some checking on the source of the error, and I assure you the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows the difference between the English words "flaunt" and "flout"; and, normally, he would not have used the former when he meant the latter, even in Feldren-ese. Yet there it is, on page 20, near the bottom of the first column. I quote: ". . . the penalties and procedures for those who flaunt the King's law." Now there may be a few folk in Feldren, as well as in the real world, who would be bold enough to flaunt before the general public the *flouting* of the King's law, but I deem not many. The sense of the sentence calls for ". . . who flout the King's law."

Acknowledging the slight possibility of the author's lapse in this matter (albeit he doesn't remember it that way), your translator (editorial staff) should know better, and should have seen to it that something as important as the King's law was not to be flouted!

Methought to correct this glaring error in the interest of the author before some other language buff picks up on it and reports the error. (Some other person might not care as much about the writer as I do.)

You may refer to me as the Dragon Lady who has played the role of Mother to Arthur Collins (the writer of the article) for the past thirty-one years. Most of those years have been delightful, I might add.

Margaret Shirley Collins
Linton, Ind.

'Tis a pleasure indeed to hear from the person who is more responsible than any other for the fact that Arthur Collins is a writer for DRAGON® Magazine — and, for that matter, the fact that Arthur Collins is.

Verily, much as I abhor the thought of turning mother against son or vice versa, the facts must be told. Sir Arthur's original manuscript did indeed use the word "flaunt." And yes, we should have noticed it when translating the words from typewritten manuscript to printed page. But, if the full truth be known (what the heck?), we didn't think it was wrong.

Sir Arthur cannot be blamed for failing to remember what he wrote — the manuscript was in our possession for more than a year before we published it. We do willingly share the blame for the error; 'twas our fault for not seeing it as much as Arthur's for committing it. The only error he must bear alone is the minor fault of not keeping a copy of his manuscript, which would have enabled mother and son to keep the problem in the family. But if he had done that, our mailbox would never have been graced by the above letter. I, for one, am glad we make an occasional mistake — because sometimes it's a lot of fun to be corrected. — KM

Forgotten errors

Dear Editor:

The scoring system for the adventure "Into The Forgotten Realms," in issue #95, had some inaccuracies. First of all, it states that 10 points are to be given to the first player to reach into one of the "air globes" in area 20. However, the "air globes" are in area 25. Secondly, it also says that players should receive 15 points for deducing the existence of a lich in the dungeon before crossing over the chasm into the northern end of the dungeon, or before talking to the dead man in area 16. The last part of that sentence should read: "or before talking to the dead man in area 17."

Mark Nemeth
Ridgecrest, Calif.

(Sigh.) Thanks, Mark. The discrepancies cropped up when we slightly redesigned some parts of the environment, which involved making some changes in the numbering of the encounter areas. Unfortunately, we didn't carry over those changes into the piece of text that detailed the scoring system. Fortunately the corrections are easily made by anyone who becomes familiar with the material, just as Mark did. — RM

Cockatrice query

Dear Dragon:

"The ecology of the cockatrice" (issue #95) did not state how much flesh a cockatrice can turn to stone. Does this mean it can turn a mountain of flesh to stone? What if people were to hold hands in a line, and one person was struck by a cockatrice? Would everyone turn to stone?

Peter Carignan
Somersworth, N. H.

The petrification power of the cockatrice is very similar to the reverse of the 6th-level magic-user spell stone to flesh. That is, only one creature can be affected at one time — whether that victim is as small as a halfling or as large as a brontosaurus (the closest thing to a "mountain of flesh" that we can think of). Any character or creature that happens to be touching the victim when a cockatrice strikes is unaffected. A group of characters could join hands in the presence of a cockatrice without all of them becoming subject to its strike — but why would they want to do such a thing in the first place? — KM

Ability limits

Dear Dragon,

The article on new demi-human rules (issue #95) says that no magic can raise an ability higher than shown. What if a character has a girdle of giant strength which raises his strength above the highest listing in the article? Should I use the limit given in the article, or is there an extension to the table, or does the magic of the girdle not count?

Andy Henrick
Raleigh, N. C.

Several magic items can be used to boost an ability score (most often strength) beyond its normal limit — but such changes are only temporary, and it seems that they would still be permissible. The prohibition on increasing ability scores beyond the given limits applies to permanent changes, such as an increase bestowed by a magical book or tome. It does not apply to the

temporary increase gained by the use of a girdle of giant strength, a potion of giant strength, gauntlets of ogre power, or another magic item that works in similar fashion; when the girdle is taken off or the potion's duration expires, the character's ability score returns to normal — and it's that normal score which can't be raised beyond the limits shown on the tables. — KM

Trove revisited

Dear Dragon:

When a bard uses the *trumpet of doom* ("Treasure Trove," issue #91), does the character get any bonuses for using it in the way that bards gain bonuses for using a *lyre of building*, *horn of blasting*, etc.? If the bard does get bonuses, what are they?

David Chan
Elmhurst, N.Y.

A bard who winds the trumpet of doom will be

able to animate skeletons and zombies for double the normal duration given. Thus one skeleton may be activated for 120 hours, two zombies for 60 hours each, and so forth. — RM

Dear Dragon:

Can a sword of cowardice (issue #91, "Treasure Trove") be used by a cavalier of good alignment, who radiates a protection from fear aura in a 1" radius? Or could the sword's personality be altered by a limited wish, wish, alter reality, or by some other spell or means?

Mike Beatty
Dundas, Ontario

Unfortunately, the sword's innate curse of cowardice will override a cavalier's protective abilities. The sword is also immune to remove fear spells. Only a full wish can remove the cowardly personality of the sword, making it non-intelligent and stripping all of its special abilities, other than its +5 enchantment. — RM

Dear Dragon:

Issue #91's "Treasure Trove" was great, but I have one question. How do you decide if one of the new items given will be in a treasure hoard the characters find?

Gregory Vica
San Diego, Calif.

A *Dungeon Master* may introduce these new magical items into a campaign without trouble by simply rolling up a "normal" hoard of magic items, then replacing certain ones with similar items from the "Treasure Trove." A necklace of missiles may be replaced by a necklace of bad taste, or a rod of beguiling dropped in place of a rod of many things. The DM may also create a treasure hoard by tossing in any items he or she wishes to include, ignoring the tables. — RM

Nobody's home

Dear Dragon:

I have a question concerning the article in issue #95, "The many shapes of apes." In the section describing "certain other common features" of apes, the "% in lair" was noted as "Nil." In the *Monster Manual*, the "% in lair" is "10%." What happened?

Mike Cleckner
Atkinson, N.H.

The *Monster Manual* states that the "% in lair" for a normal ape (a gorilla) is "Nil"; the carnivorous ape is described as being found in a lair 10% of the time.

Normally, apes have no fixed lairs, tending to wander and make temporary camps or beds in tree limbs. Carnivorous apes are more territorial and actually establish fixed lairs, such as in caves, hollow trees, and ruins. — RM

He asked for it

Dear people,

I just got your April issue and have several questions and comments.

First, any news on when, if ever, Phil Foglio's collection of "What's New?" is going to be published?

I hate to disappoint Kim on his editorial but I didn't need a mirror to read it.

Is Roger Raupp ever going to start putting hidden, runic messages into his drawings again?

Have you ever thought about putting out a collection of past covers?

A game-related question: If a character has all the fingers of one hand amputated and puts a ring of regeneration on each one, will each one grow into a clone of the owner of the fingers?

Have you ever gotten a letter with so many questions that you decided not to print it?

(Turn to page 90)

The World Gamers Guide

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Game Features

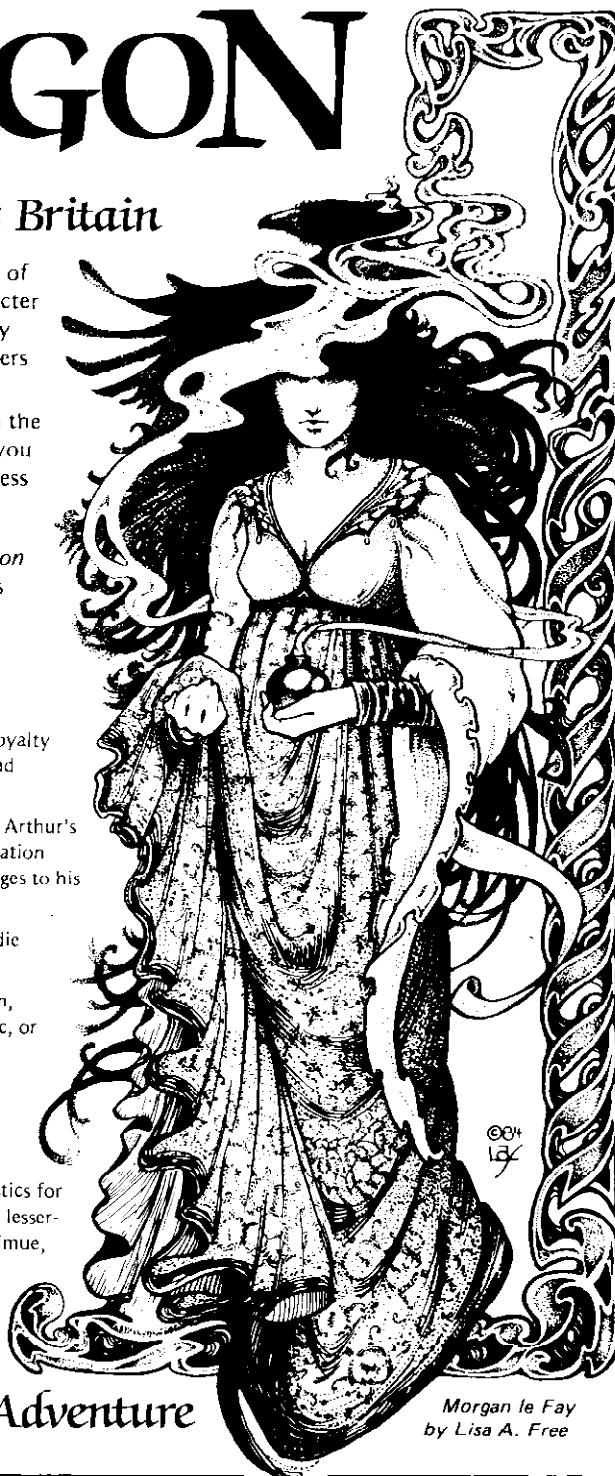
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The forum

This is a letter in answer to the article in DRAGON issue #95 in which Gary Gygax repudiates any serious connection between the AD&D game and *Lord of the Rings*. He is correct to the letter of the rules, but certainly not to the intent. However, a few points by we diehard Tolkien fans should be cleared up, lest erroneous assumptions be taken as fact. It is said to be impossible to run a Middle Earth AD&D campaign without modification to existing rules, but some of the points made by Mr. Gygax seem to be lacking.

1) The elves of Middle Earth are incredibly diverse, having bred for tens of thousands of years and spread politically, geographically, physiologically, and philosophically. Some even advanced to demigod status. After the Awakening, their height gradually reduced, and their immortality lost during the Age of Man.

2) The mere ring of invisibility has alignment, intelligence, ego, ambition, and a propensity for falling off in melee, as well as invisibility, domination, limited illusionary powers, and (theoretical) immortality. It could be considered a self-attuning talisman/artifact.

3) Of course Sauron faded in a cloud of smoke, he didn't think that his enemies would destroy such a valuable item as the One Ring, and made the mistake of investing much of his essence therein. His corporeal body was destroyed in the Whelming of Numinor.

4) Gandalf was a Wielder of Fire, a worshiper of the Flame of Anor, and the bearer of both a Ring of Power and one of the foremost swords of the Age. I don't think it necessary that a mage continuously prove himself by casting high-level spells (especially if being searched for through the Ether) and a close examination of his role in Middle Earth history *shows* his power. Ineffectual? I think not.

5) Tom Bombadil has (practically) unlimited power over a (relatively) finite area. Tolkien couldn't do much more with him outside of the Barrow Downs, as he seemed to lose much of his powers when away from his area. He could perhaps be considered as a sort of Elemental Deity.

The wealth of *LOTR* information makes Middle Earth unexcelled as a campaign world. I know of no other that can boast an atlas, albums, lexicons, dictionaries, songbooks, quizbooks, biographies, bestiaries, maps, and other invaluable tools of the DMing trade. Perhaps to Mr. Gygax, Tolkien may not have been a particularly dynamic writer, but his world certainly has the scope necessary to run a complex and successful campaign.

J.R. Smith
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The forum section is not usually a place for editorial comment, but this is an unusual case. We judged the above letter to be the least inflammatory and insulting of the many pages of feedback we received after the publication of Mr. Gygax's essay concerning the works of Tolkien, and we printed it in the interest of giving the "other side" a semblance of equal time. Virtually every other letter we got was an unbridled expres-

sion of outrage; some of them bordered on being slanderous, if they did not actually cross over that border. Although we respect the strong feelings that were behind those letters, we don't intend this space to be used for a running debate on the topic. Mr. Gygax's opinions are just that — opinions. And his assertion about the lack of influence that Tolkien had on the development of the game systems is not a topic of contention. How can anyone else assert that the opposite is in fact true, when Mr. Gygax — the only person in a position to know — states otherwise? It is not proper, to say the least, to suggest (as some letter-writers did) that despite what he wrote, the D&D® and AD&D® games were in fact substantially influenced by Tolkien's work. We are all, of course, free to express our disagreement with someone else's opinion. But unless those disagreements — on any topic — are expressed rationally and reasonably, we will not risk lending them any credence by publishing them in these pages.

The Editor

* * * *

The current "good vs. evil" debate in the forum section seems rather pointless. Both sides seem to ignore the main principle of the game, namely to *role-play*. All of the game mechanics, and this includes alignment, are designed to make the game playable by systematizing a wide variety of concepts both physical and abstract. To me this means that all of these mechanics must be subservient to the basic aim of the game, and where they conflict with play of the game as you interpret that, they should be modified or abandoned in favor of something more workable.

To give a relevant example of this, in the campaign I run alignment is used for two basic purposes: to give some idea of how NPCs will react to certain things, and to determine the effects of such things as *detect evil* and picking up aligned magic items. The players are expected to, and do, role-play their characters. Recently an assassin character risked his neck to save a complete stranger from being hanged for a murder he did not commit. This was entirely in character, since Khamuel only kills as a profession and believes that killing for other reasons is both untidy and distasteful. The same character avoids torture and definitely prefers veiled threats to open violence. He is probably more "good" than some of his neutral companions. This is the way the character has been developed, and I would never dream of penalizing him for such actions.

It seems to me, therefore, that the alignment system should be treated very carefully and should never be allowed to interfere with the play of the game.

Lastly, may I say that I am very cynical about those characters who argue that "good" is right and then go out and slay indiscriminately all those who get between them and their goal. I would be interested to hear someone try to justify such a position, especially from the lawful good standpoint, which, according to the DMG, believes that "Each creature is entitled to life, relative freedom, and the prospect of happiness." The only justification I can see is the incredible

arrogance that your sense of values is "right" over and above that of anyone else and that therefore you have an arbitrary right to decide which creatures are allowed to exercise their rights and which are not. This comes down to your right to decide which creatures may live and which may die. Until someone can justify this position, I hope no one will be so hypocritical as to spout it while condemning others. The alignments of characters in the AD&D game basically come down to the degree of, and motive behind, their evil.

David Finlayson
Sydney, Australia

* * * *

In some campaigns that I have played in, the Dungeon Master did not care whether your character was right- or left-handed since he could not see any valid reason to make the distinction. To him it was just another useless detail to keep track of. However, when I showed him a simple method for determining handedness and the reasons for doing so, he agreed with me and had all of his players roll it up for their characters on the spot.

The method for determining handedness assumes that the majority of the people will be right-handed with a few being left-handed and a small minority being ambidextrous. Roll a d6 and a d20 together. If the d20 is higher than the d6, then the character is right-handed. (Obviously, this will happen most of the time; the actual probability is over 80%.) If the d20 is less than the d6, then the character is left-handed. If the two rolls are equal, then the character is able to use either hand with equal ability. Note that this does not remove the dexterity penalties covered in the DMG for using two weapons. It means that the character can use a single weapon in whatever hand he chooses.

The major difference that handedness makes is in a combat situation. Since the majority of fighters — or any class — will right-handed, they will have learned and practiced with other right-handed fighters. They will have learned the standard shield techniques for protecting against a sword being swung from their left. In many cases, that may have been all the weapons master was able to teach them if he was unfamiliar with the methods of fighting against left-handed opponents. In other words, when two [right-handed] lighters stand face-to-face each will have his sword opposite the other's shield. But if a left-handed fighter stands facing a right-handed fighter, he must have had training in how to cover his off side, because his shield is not carried on the same side as the right-handed person's sword. The right-handed fighter, in all probability, has not had to worry about this, and because of that fact the left-hander has a distinct advantage, since he knows how to use his shield to cover his off side while the other fighter does not. What it boils down to is that the right-handed fighter will not be able to effectively use his shield, thus lowering his armor class by one. If two left-handed fighters face each other, this advantage is nullified since (as with two right-handers) their shields are opposite each other's swords.

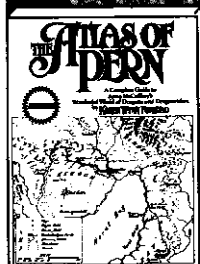
The advantage may seem trivial, but consider what could happen when a character is around 7th or 8th level. At this point the DM will probably be sending higher-level NPCs at the party, and the NPCs will probably have magic items. Take a situation where an 8th-level left-handed PC fighter is up against an 11th-level right-handed NPC with a +3 shield. Not only does the

(Turn to page 22)

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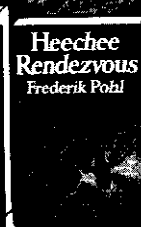
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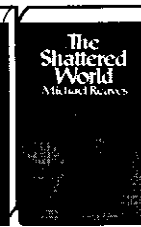
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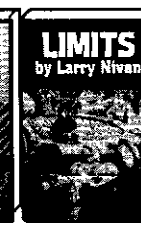
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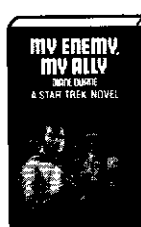
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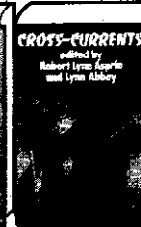
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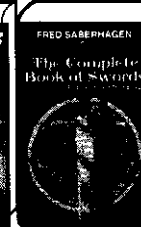
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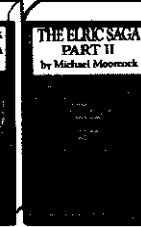
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Deities and their faithful

How gods and worshipers fit into the AD&D® game

By Gary Gygax

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The ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game is a role-playing game. This must be stressed, for too often the play of the game tends toward combat and questing. To allow this sort of activity to predominate is to lose sight of the greatest pleasures of the ongoing game — character interaction, meetings with intelligent monsters, and dealing with deities. When one considers it, this role-playing purpose is why deities are included in the game system to begin with. Of course, deities are part and parcel of the heroic epics written by Homer and those who followed him, well as the myth and legends and fairy tales which have come down to us — although in some of the latter works, other sorts of ultra-powerful beings take the place of Zeus *et al.* A major element of any campaign is the deities and their demands, machinations, rivalries, and confrontations. Let us, then, consider their power base before we deal with those who serve them in the campaign play. Understanding what motivates these greater beings will certainly assist in development of proper role-playing of any type of character.

Various and sundry statistics are given for deities, but let us make a basic assumption. Their power comes from those who believe in them; without followers, any deity is consigned to operations on some other plane of existence, without the means to touch upon the Prime Material. Such deities have no immediate interest to us, since they do not fall within the current scope of the game. Thus, we are interested only in deities with followers dwelling on the Prime Material Plane of the campaign. These faithful give the various deities power. Of course, this idea is not new. It has been put forth often by others, whether seriously or as a device of literature. It serves as an excellent game device as well.

So . . . each deity draws strength and power from those mortals who believe. The power gained is determined thus:

1,000 believers = 1 hit point

1,000 of same alignment = 1 power point

Hit points apply only on the plane on which the believers dwell. All faithful on all planes then combine to determine the strength of the deity on the "home" plane inhabited. For example, a neutral good deity will be weak on planes where evil rules, for there will be few, if any, followers of that deity in such a place.

Power points are the stuff from which all deities of the same alignment draw to use



their spell-like powers, issue and enforce commands, and perform other abilities they may have.

If a normal believer is worth $1/1000$ hit point or power point, then those faithful with 2 levels or hit dice are worth twice as much, those with 3 levels or hit dice three times as much, and so on. All clerical types are similarly worth twice what non-clerical types are worth, for they are stronger in faith. Paladins must fall within the general class of clerics, as do shamans and witch doctors. So, for instance, a bugbear follower is worth $3/1000$ point, a fire giant $11/1000$, a 10th-level fighter $10/1000$, and a 15th-level druid $30/1000$ point. With further respect to clerical types, not only are they worth more in hit point and power point value, but they also actively extend the faith, so they are also nearer and dearer to their deities than other believers of other callings. (Special orders might be exceptions, such as the Thugs, the Knights of Malta, etc.)

After the total of available power points is thus determined, the deities of a given alignment must gather in convocation to decide amongst themselves how power will be divided — some faithful might be weak, some might serve more than one deity, and so on. Although the affairs of such lofty beings are not the business of this article, it can be safely stated that division is fair and along the lines of total follower strength. (After all, until all other alignments are done away with, so that only those with a "proper" mind-set remain, the deities of that alignment have common cause against all those of different alignments.)

Considering the foregoing, it must now be clear to all why maintenance of alignment is important. To change alignment is to take away from not only the character's deity but all deities of that ilk! That is grim indeed. Much of role-playing is tied up in understanding the character and the role to be played. This information regarding alignment with respect to power points provides DM and player alike with more material upon which to base their role-playing. In like vein, faithful service to a chosen deity can be better understood and

role-played. A wavering in alignment disturbs all deities of that alignment and alerts the particular deity that something is amiss. To break alignment values might well incur the wrath of not only the character's deity, but all allied ones too. In all cases the penalties indicated in the Dungeon Masters Guide will be applied for actual breaking of alignment. For wavering, more subtle sanctions can be invoked, although if a cleric-type is involved, the sanctions should not be subtle at all! Refusal to grant spells, visitations, and so forth are clearly in order in such cases.

If there are penalties for breaking faith and alignment, then there must also be rewards for the opposite sort of behavior — strict adherence to, and strong advocacy of, one's alignment. Granting a bit more "luck" to such a character is possible — perhaps an extra pip on a hit die roll which is low, or the ability to deliver extra damage when fighting a creature inimical to one's alignment and deity. Characters who are true to alignment, who follow the aims of their deity, and who work for and tithe to "the faith" should certainly fall into the general category of "favored." It should be stressed that "favor" in this case does NOT mean "divine intervention" à la the Greek gods of Homer's *Iliad* — unless the entire campaign has deities popping up here and there on a continual basis to meddle with and muddle up the affairs of humankind.

To give you additional food for thought, here are a few rewards and penalties for adherence to or deviation from alignment. Use them as foundations.

Minor rewards: 1 extra hit point, maximum weapon damage on one particular attack, making an unsuccessful blow into a successful one (one miss becomes a hit), avoiding a surprise situation, escaping an encounter, avoiding a trap, gaining minimal additional treasure.

Major rewards: 1 extra hit point on each hit die possessed at the time of gaining favor, escaping a certain death situation, raising a characteristic by 1 point (going above 18 is highly discouraged), granting

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Sticks, stones, and bones

Weapons to use when the enemy swipes your sword

by Stephen Inniss

The Players Handbook lists more than forty different weapon types, covering nearly every combat weapon invented before the gun. Doubtless, those that haven't yet been detailed will be added as the scope of the AD&D® game system increases, but a whole area of armed combat has yet to be touched on: the game has no rules for the combat use of items which aren't designed to be weapons. In fact, so great has been the concentration on designed weapons that even the commonplace rock has been ignored in the official tables.

Rules that deal with improvised and impromptu weapons can greatly benefit an AD&D campaign. One of the most exciting scenarios a DM can devise is one which the player characters are somehow separated from their weapons and must make do with the materials at hand. The drama of these situations may explain why they are so common in the myths, legends, and heroic fiction that inspire AD&D players: somehow it is more heroic to fell enemies with a branch or the jawbone of an ass than it is to dispatch them by more conventional means. Aside from these dramatic benefits, the inclusion of these new rules favors game balance, since characters (player or non-player) who aren't "officially" armed are more likely to survive melee. This allows the DM to add another touch of realism to the campaign, since characters needn't be walking armories when they step out onto the street, and non-player characters are less vulnerable to the aggressions of armed player characters. Also, a campaign that allows for unconventional tactics in melee favors the more imaginative and resourceful players. Last but not least, barroom brawls are much more interesting (in fiction) if the action isn't restricted to mere grappling and pummeling.

In refereeing such action, though, the DM must be prepared to deal with a broad range of possibilities. What if a combatant snatches up a meat cleaver? A burning branch? A shovel? A chair? Burning coals from a brazier? What if some rogue pelts his enemies with rocks, or casts sand in their eyes? What happens when a character tosses a pot of boiling stew at an oncoming ogre, or smashes and lights a keg of brandy in a tavern brawl? As a further complication, players are likely to be familiar with the objects and substances involved (though not, it is to be hoped, with their use in lethal combat). They are therefore more likely to notice and object to "unrealistic" rules than they might be with such arcane

things as medieval arms and armor or with wholly imaginary things such as magic.

Below is a set of rules which allows the DM to deal with the use of improvised weapons. An attempt has been made to make these rules as broadly applicable as possible, and to keep the addition of new procedures to a minimum. Though an effort is made to keep up the facade of realism, plausibility is sacrificed to playability where the two come into conflict. This last is a well-established tradition within the AD&D game, and one that has been followed with evident success; it is not one to be lightly broken.

The field of available emergency weapons has here been divided into two broad categories: dangerous objects, which are harmful because of their size or shape and may be compared to more conventional weapons, and dangerous materials, substances which are in themselves harmful.

Dangerous objects

Weapon equivalents

There are many items which may be equated with actual weapons, if the fact that they are not designed to be used as such is taken into account. A heavy stick or an iron bar may not be a war-club, but it can certainly serve as one. For game purposes, such objects can be divided into three classes, according to how useful they are in combat. Those which closely resemble a weapon in size and shape are assigned to class 1 (a hatchet, say, compared to a hand-axe). Those of less similar form but which are still more or less suited to the motions used in combat are assigned to class 2 (a small splitting maul or a heavy meat cleaver might be compared to a handaxe). Finally, items which are not all that well suited to combat use and aren't much like their equivalent weapons are assigned to class 3 if they are useful at all (a small adze might be a class 3 handaxe). Each class carries different penalties to hit probability and weapon speed, as shown in Table A.

For the sake of simplicity, items which are too small or too light are assigned the same penalties "to hit" and to weapon speed as those which are too heavy or too bulky. The larger weapons are considered to be slow because of the long recovery time following a swing or jab, and less likely to hit because of their tendency to strike glancing (non-lethal) blows. The smaller weapons are slow because it takes more concentration to use

one of them effectively, and are less likely to hit opponents because they lack the necessary weight and reach. In either case, it might be logical to assign penalties — except that a penalty of as little as -1 to damage (the smallest such penalty possible) drastically reduces the effectiveness of a weapon, and has an especially large effect on weapons that don't do much damage to begin with. Relatively inefficient weapons are therefore accounted for with a "to hit" penalty.

Objects that are used as weapons are usually compared to the simplest and least lethal true weapons they resemble, and shape is usually considered to be more important than composition in making such comparisons. Thus, a stick of wood or a bar of metal is compared to a club or staff (depending on its length) rather than to a bo stick, a mace, or some more specialized weapon. For simplicity, weapon types (particularly "club" and "knife") are used in the broadest sense. This is not unprecedented, however; consider the range of weapons included under the official classification "short sword."

Various items which resemble the weapons described in the Players Handbook are listed in Table B1. Also listed are objects which may be compared to the new weapon types detailed by Gary Gygax in DRAGON® Magazine #64. (*Editor's note: These new weapons will be fully described in Unearthed Arcana, the AD&D game rules supplement scheduled for release this summer.*) Mingled with these are things which have no equivalents among the official weapon types, even by the liberal standards used here. The statistics for these last are to be found in Tables C1 and C2. Table B2 is a separate list of rock-like items; the statistics for rocks are found in Tables C1 and C2 as well.

Tables B1 and B2 are only suggestive, or for use as quick references. Though they include a number of things that adventurers are likely to find lying about, they are not intended to be exhaustive. Note that some common items have not been included because they are unlikely to be lethal in a combat situation. A rasp, or a saw, or a thorny vine might deal out a nasty cut or scrape, but not a fatal wound.

The weapon classifications in Table B1 assume melee combat, and those in Table B2 assume missile combat. In most cases, items meant for hand-held use should be considered one class lower if used in missile combat, and vice versa, making ones that

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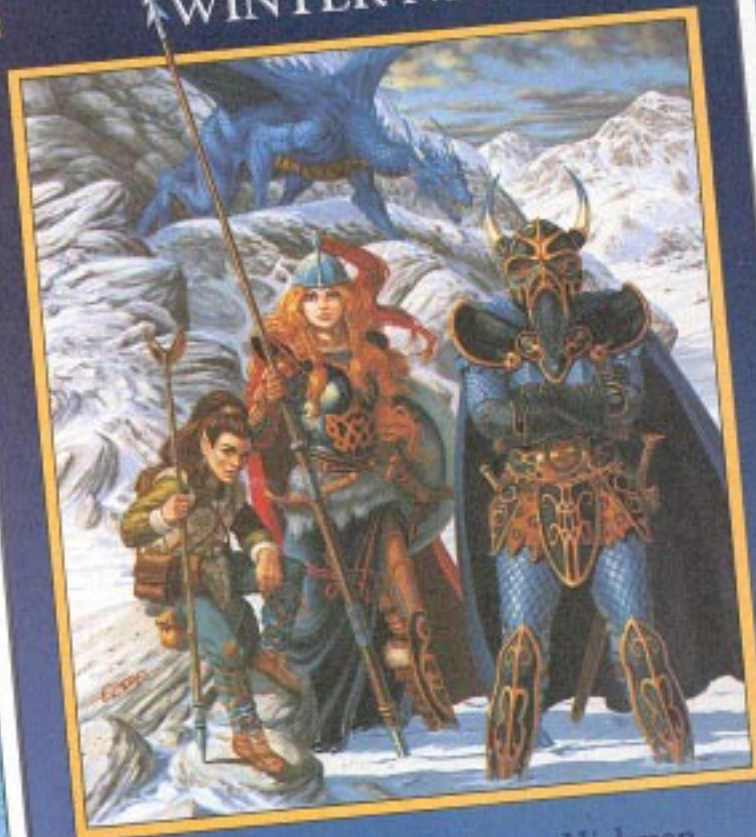
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were class 3 in their primary function unless in the other capacity. (For instance, an adze may be a very inefficient substitute for a hand axe, but it is utterly useless as a throwing axe.) There are inevitably exceptions to this general rule, so DMs must use common sense in applying it, adjusting the penalty as required. It is suggested that this rule be applied to true weapons as well; that is, a club made for melee would be class 1 as a hurled weapon, and a club made for throwing would be class 1 as a hand-held weapon. Similarly, a dagger not balanced for flight would be class 1 (at best) as a missile. Some weapons will be dual-purpose, of course, but chances are that most will be specialized for either hand-to-hand or missile combat.

Additional weapon types

As mentioned above, some items are not easily equated with official weapon types. Statistics for these are found in Tables C1 and C2, and the terms used there are explained below:

Framework: This is a catch-all category, used to describe any open construction of several parts which is made of some reasonably hard and dense material; a chair or a ladder, for instance. Nothing will correspond exactly to the statistics given in Tables C1 and C2, since there is no such thing as a chair designed for combat. Most frameworks will be class 3, a few will be class 2, and those of the handiest shape and heaviest material will be class 1 "weapons." Very large pieces of furniture (tables, couches) are not included in this class because they are too big to be useful, and neither are those which consist primarily of a single board such as benches. The latter are treated as lumber (see below) if they can be used at all. Only characters who are 5' or more in height may use large frameworks in combat.

Lumber: This term covers any heavy, solid piece of wood which is too big to be classified as a staff or a club but is not so large that it is useless in combat. As with frameworks, no item will correspond exactly to the statistics given. The most useful pieces will be class 1, and class 3 lumber will be much more common than class 1. A character must be at least 5' tall and weigh at least 100 pounds to use such a large "weapon" effectively.

Rock: As described in Tables C1 and C2, rocks are either metal pellets or specially selected stones. Those used as missiles are ovoid or spherical in shape, while those used as hand-held weapons can be of any shape and size that fits comfortably into the hand. As noted, only large or very large rocks can be used in hand-to-hand combat. Characters weighing less than 100 pounds cannot use very large rocks at all. The sizes and weights given in Table C2 are for spherical rocks made of natural stone; metal "rocks" will be smaller.

There is a limit to how much damage a rock can do beyond the basic figures given. Otherwise, rock-throwing monks or fighters

might be unreasonably formidable. The maximum allowable damage bonus is +1 for small rocks, +2 for medium-sized rocks, +3 for large rocks, and +4 for very large rocks, whether the bonus is due to strength, skill, magic, or a combination of these factors. However, "to hit" figures are not subject to any such restrictions.

Ordinary rocks which are chosen from good material but not carefully sorted will be class 1 weapons, those chosen in greater haste or from less desirable material are class 2, and those that are snatched up quickly or chosen from very poorly shaped material will be class 3. Almost any other hard, heavy object may be equated with a rock if it isn't too much longer than it is thick and if it is not too bulky. Weight, rather than volume, is used as a basis for comparison; a filled container is considered to be a larger-sized rock than an empty one of the same size.

Sling stones and sling bullets count as true weapon-quality rocks, with no "to hit" penalty at all. The stones or bullets used in an ordinary sling are small rocks, and the missiles used in staff slings are medium-sized rocks. Missiles which might otherwise be hand-hurled may also be used as ammunition in slings if they are not too large. Treat them as sling stones, and use the weapon classifications given in Table C1.

Sickle, war: A sickle-like true weapon is rather rare since, by the time the sickle has been fully adapted to cutting people rather than plants, it looks and performs basically like a knife, a dagger, or a short sword. However, some peoples have used sickle-like weapons in war or personal combat, and (more importantly for this purpose) there are a number of tools of sickle-like form, so statistics for the weapon have been introduced here.

Hot weapons

A burning wooden weapon or a red-hot metal one gains no bonus "to hit," but does score an extra point of damage on ordinary opponents (those not especially vulnerable to or protected from fire). Even a creature which was not harmed by the force of the blow may possibly take heat damage. Cold-using or inflammable creatures will take even more damage from a hot weapon, typically 1-3 points (cf. the mummy in the *Monster Manual*). Wooden weapons which have been burning for any length of time are likely to break, as described in the following section.

Weak weapons

Many items which might be pressed into service as weapons are not really strong enough to stand up to combat use. The weakest of these will fall apart at the first effective blow (a successful hit), and others may be allowed saving throws versus either a normal blow or a crushing blow, depending on the strength of the item in question. Such saving throws should be made at a penalty of -1 for each bonus point of damage scored due to strength. An item which

fails its saving throw or which is deemed to have fallen apart or broken automatically on the first hit has been rendered useless and must be discarded as a weapon, or possibly used in another mode (a bottle that had been used as a club or rock might be used as a knife after it shattered, for instance). Whether or not an item is likely to break and, if so, how likely such a break would be are up to the DM and must be decided on the basis of common sense.

A weapon which has a point or blade of some brittle material (stone, bone, or glass) counts as a weak weapon if it is used against metal armor, since it is likely to be shattered or blunted. A saving throw must be made, as described above (typically versus a crushing blow). This applies to *any* such weapon, whether it is a broken bottle or a highly crafted stone spearpoint.

Dangerous materials

Harmful materials that might be used in combat may be put into three general classes according to their mode of use: broadcast weapons, which are scattered or sprayed from an open-ended container with intent to do lethal damage; irritants, those which are broadcast in small amounts with the primary purpose of blinding an opponent; and grenade-like missiles, materials hurled in a container that bursts on impact. Although grenade-like missiles are discussed in the DMG, the rules there are limited (reasonably enough) to what player characters might bring along for the express purpose of monster-burning. The primary focus here is on things that might be used on the spur of the moment.

Broadcast weapons

Table D lists damage values for various liquids that might be found simmering over the campfire or in the kitchen. Factors in the amount of damage done include how well the liquid sticks to its target, how much of it there is, and how hot it is. The damage figures in Table D assume that the liquid has been heated to boiling or near-boiling temperature; ordinary water boils at a lower temperature than briny or sugary water (such as found in soup), and that in turn has a lower boiling temperature than oil or syrup. Additionally, syrup sticks more readily to a target and thus has a greater potential for damage than oil or fat.

A broadcast attack is made against a single opponent at melee range — the liquid cannot be used as a missile weapon, but the container may be able to be thrown when it is emptied (see below). A broadcast attack replaces any and all regular weapon attacks that the wielder would otherwise have been entitled to in the round; a high-level fighter, although permitted more than one attack per round normally, cannot make a broadcast attack and follow it up with some other attack in the same round. (A broadcast attack is essentially a "two in one" attack anyway; see below.) The attacker must be

able to handle the container comfortably if it is hot, using gloves or a handle or possibly some form of magical protection. A broadcast attack at melee range has a very high chance of affecting the target, but often fails to realize its full damage potential. The attacker must roll a successful hit against armor class 10, modified by the attacker's strength adjustment, the defender's dexterity adjustment, or magical protection (if applicable). If a hit is scored, the target is allowed a saving throw vs. breath weapon, success indicating half damage (round fractions down; 0 result possible). If the emptied container is hard and heavy enough to count as a rock, the attacker is allowed a separate "to hit" roll against the target (using its normal armor class, as if the rock were being wielded in melee) to see if the container itself did damage. The rock can be considered a melee weapon or a missile weapon, at the user's option, if either kind of usage is possible.

Player characters and most other humanoids cannot use larger volumes of liquid than indicated on Table D. The weight and bulk of the container, and the liquid itself, combine to make any larger container (and its contents) an ineffective weapon. In addition, no character weighing less than 100 pounds can employ a container with a large volume of liquid. At the other extreme, creatures of ogre size/strength or greater would be able to "wield" volumes of up to twice the amount shown for "large," with a

commensurate increase in potential damage. (This can be achieved by either stepping up the damage figures for "large" volumes, or by penalizing or eliminating the target's saving throw.) Creatures of greater than stone giant size/strength might be able to use volumes of up to three times "large" size.

The procedure is the same for liquids other than those listed on Table D — the sort that might be thrown as grenade-like weapons (see Tables F1 and F2). If the attacker makes a successful hit against armor class 10, the target is allowed a saving throw versus breath weapon for half damage. Materials such as hot tar or molten metal are not considered, since they are too heavy and too viscous to be useful in hand-to-hand combat — even assuming that the attacker could handle the material safely.

Cold or cold-using monsters may take extra damage from hot liquids. Particulars will vary, but the amount is typically an extra point per die of damage, with a penalty of -1 on the saving throw. Fire-using or hot creatures, on the other hand, may take damage from room-temperature water because of its quenching effect; treat such liquid as if it were boiling water used against a normal opponent. Very cold water will do +1 damage per die and boiling water -1 per die against hot creatures, boiling soup or brine is treated as boiling water, and oil or syrup is not effective at all against such creatures.

Irritants

Table E1 lists some substances which might be used with the primary intent of impairing an opponent's vision. As with the broadcast weapons mentioned previously, such an assault is effective only at melee range against a single opponent. However, since the volume of material is small (a cupful or handful), the use of an irritant does not preclude other attacks that the wielder may be entitled to in that round. A character with high dexterity may opt to throw the irritant with one hand and strike with a weapon in the other. In such cases, the usual penalties for using two weapons at once apply (see DMG, p.70).

When attempting to blind an opponent, the attacker must roll "to hit" armor class 5. If this succeeds, the defender must save versus breath weapon or get an eyeful of whatever material was cast. A successful save indicates that the defender's vision is unimpaired and that hit-point damage (if any) is halved. Failure indicates that full effects will be felt, as follows.

Someone whose eyes have been affected by an irritant is nearly blind (penalty of 3 to saving throws, armor class rating, and "to hit" score for the duration of the effect) and will not be able to cast any spells or attack psionically during that time because of the pain of the injury. If the irritant is a very strong one (lye, powerful acid, hot pepper, etc.), then the impairment of vision will

(Text continues on page 15)

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TABLE A: Classification of weapon-like objects

Class	Description	Hit probability	Speed adjustment
1	Same form, different purpose	-1	+1
2	Similar form	-2	+2
3	Poor design for combat use	-3	+3

TABLE B2: Class and type of rock-like items

Object	Class, type	Object	Class, type
bottle . . . . .	.1, small to medium	lantern . . . . .	.2, medium
box, small iron . . . . .	.2, medium to v. large	lamp, terracotta. . . . .	.2, medium
box, small wooden . . . . .	.3, medium to large	mirror, large metal . . . . .	.1, medium
brick. . . . .	.1, large	plate. . . . .	.3, medium
chamberpot . . . . .	.2, medium	saucepan. . . . .	.2, medium
cobblestone . . . . .	.1, medium to large	skillet . . . . .	.1, medium
firewood . . . . .	.3, medium to large	skull, human . . . . .	.3, medium
goblet, metal or ceramic. . . . .	.2, medium	whetstone . . . . .	.1, medium to large
kettle, small. . . . .	.2, very large		

The class given (1, 2, or 3) assumed missile combat. Items without convenient handles will be one class lower if used in melee. The size/bulk type given for a container (small, medium, etc.) assumes that the container is empty; liquid-filled containers are effectively one size larger, and rock- or metal-filled ones two sizes larger.

TABLE C1: Weight and damage for unofficial weapon types

Weapon type	Encumbrance	Damage vs. opponent	
		Size S-M	Size L
<i>Framework, small</i>	c. 500	1-3	1-2
<i>Framework, large</i>	c. 1000	1-4	1-3
<i>Lumber</i>	c. 500	1-8	1-6
Rock, small	2	1	-
Rock, medium	5	1-2	1
Rock, large	35	1-3	1-2
Rock, very large	150+	1-4	1-3
Sickle, war	15	1-3	1-2

Items in italic type are not true weapons (see text).

TABLE C2: General data for unofficial weapon types

Hand-held weapon	Space		Speed factor	Armor class adjustment									
	Length	required		10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	
Framework, small	2' -4'	2' -4'	5	0	0	0	-1	-1	-3	-5	-7	-9	
Framework, large	5'+	5'+	7	0	0	0	-1	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8	
Lumber	5'+	5'+	10	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-2	-4	-6	
Rock, large	c . 4 "	—	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	
Rock, very large	c . 8 "	—	10	-2	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sickle, war	1½'	2'	3	+3	+1	+1	0	0	-2	-2	-3	-4	
Hurled weapon	Fire	Range			10	Armor class adjustment							
	rate	S	M	L		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Framework, small	1	½	1	1½	0	0	-1	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8	-10
Framework, large	½	-	½	1	0	0	-1	-1	-2	-3	-5	-7	-9
Lumber	½	-	½	1	0	0	0	0	-1	-2	-3	-5	-7
Rock, small	3	1½	3	4½	+2	0+1	0	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8	
Rock, medium	2	1	2	3	+2	0	0+1	+10	0	-1	-2	-4	-5
Rock, large	1	½	1	1½	+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-2
Rock, very large	½	-	½	1	-2	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	-1

TABLE D: Hot liquids as broadcast weapons

Amount and container	Potential damage inflicted by:			
	Boiling water	Boiling soup*	Hot oil or fat	Hot Syrup
Small (skillet, or c. 1½ pints)	1	1-2	1-3	1-4
Medium (saucepan, or c. 3 pints)	1-3	1-6	2-8	3-9
Large (kettle, or c. 6 pints)	1-6	2-12	3-12	4-16

Saving throw versus breath weapon allowed for half damage (round fractions down).
* Or brine, or other solution

TABLE B1: Weapon class and type of assorted objects

Object	Class, type
adze. . . . .	.3, battleaxe or hand axe
awl. . . . .	.3, knife
axe, woodcutting . . . . .	.1, battleaxe
bar, metal . . . . .	.2, club or staff
bench, 6'-8'. . . . .	.3, lumber
bill hook . . . . .	.2, handaxe
boat hook . . . . .	.1, hook fauchard
bottle, broken. . . . .	.1, knife
brazier . . . . .	.1, <i>small framework</i>
cart wheel . . . . .	.3, <i>large framework</i>
chain . . . . .	.2-3, horseman's flail
chair, small. . . . .	.2, <i>small framework</i>
chair, large . . . . .	.2, <i>large framework</i>
chisel. . . . .	.3, knife
cleaver. . . . .	.2, handaxe
crowbar . . . . .	.2, club
fencepost. . . . .	.2, <i>lumber</i>
figurine. . . . .	.2-3, club
firewood . . . . .	.2-3, club
fish hook, heavy (4+ inches) ..	.3, <i>sickle</i>
flail, threshing . . . . .	.2, horseman's flail
gimlet . . . . .	.3, knife
grapnel. . . . .	.3, <i>sickle</i>
hammer, smith's . . . . .	.2, hammer
hammer, sledge . . . . .	.2, hammer
hatchet. . . . .	.1, hand axe
hay hook/bag hook. . . . .	.2, <i>sickle</i>
hoe, garden . . . . .	.3, staff
knife, butcher's. . . . .	.1, dagger
knife, carving. . . . .	.1, knife
knife, paring . . . . .	.2, knife
ladder (6' -8') . . . . .	.2, <i>large framework</i>
machete. . . . .	.1, short sword
mallet, wooden . . . . .	.2, club
mattock . . . . .	.2, footman's military pick
maul . . . . .	.2, hammer
maul, splitting . . . . .	.2, battleaxe or hand axe
nightstand . . . . .	.3, <i>small framework</i>
oar . . . . .	.2, staff
paddle . . . . .	.2, club
pick . . . . .	.2, footman's military pick
pikestaff. . . . .	.2, spear or 1, staff (by use)
pitchfork, metal-tined ..	.2, military fork
pitchfork, wood-tined. . .	.3, military fork
razor . . . . .	.2, knife
scissors/shears . . . . .	.3, knife
scythe . . . . .	.3, fauchard
scroll case, bone . . . . .	.3, club
sickle. . . . .	.1, <i>war sickle</i>
shackles, metal . . . . .	.3, horseman's flail
shovel/spade . . . . .	.2, staff
spading fork . . . . .	.3, trident
stake, sharp, 5' + . . . . .	.2-3, spear
stool, 3-legged . . . . .	.2, <i>small framework</i>
table leg . . . . .	.2, club
thighbone. . . . .	.2, club
torch. . . . .	.3, club
trident, fishing . . . . .	.1, trident
walking stick, stout. . . . .	.1, club
weapon, ceremonial. . . . .	.1, variable
1x6, 6'-9' long . . . . .	.3, <i>lumber</i>
4x4, 6'-8' long . . . . .	.3, <i>lumber</i>

Weapon types in *italic* are unofficial; see Tables C1 and C2.

The weapon class given presumes melee combat. If a weapon is of a type that may be hurled, and it is so used, it will be considered one class worse (class 3 items will become unusable).

TABLE E1: Classification of irritants

Composition	Mild	Potency of given substance:	
		Strong	Very strong
Liquid :	brine	brandy	acid
	soapy water	perfume	holy/unholy water *
Granular:	dirt		lye
		ashes	ash, hot
		chaff	pepper, strong
		salt	
		sand	
		street filth	

* Effective only against certain creatures; see DMG.

TABLE E2: Effects of irritants

Substance	Duration of effect	Substance	Duration of effect
Liquid, mild.	1-4 rounds	Granular, mild.	1-3 rounds
Liquid, strong	1-8 rounds	Granular, strong	1-6 rounds
Liquid, very strong	2-12 rounds	Granular, very strong*	2-8 rounds

Effects are as follows: Pain and impairment of vision causes -3 penalty to armor class, "to hit" rolls, and saving throws; no spell casting or psionics use possible. Targets who save vs. breath weapon escape these effects.

* Vision will be permanently affected in individuals beset by this substance unless a second saving throw (versus poison) is made. Hit-point damage may also occur.

TABLE F1: General information for grenade-like weapons

Liquid contents	Standard volume	Area of effect	Damage caused by:		
			Splash	Direct	hit
Alcohol, alight	1 pint	3' diam.	nil	1-4	+1 hp
Corrosive, weak	1/2 pint	1' diam.	nil	1-2	hp
Corrosive, strong	1/2 pint	1' diam.	nil	1-4	hp
Corrosive, very strong	1/2 pint	1' diam.	1 hp	2-8	hp
Oil, ordinary, alight	1 pint	3' diam.	nil	1-6	+ 1-2 hp
Pitch, alight	1 pint	target	nil	1-4	+ 1-4 hp

Corrosives are strong acidic or alkaline substances. The acid described in the DMG is a very strong corrosive, and lye is considered a very strong corrosive of the alkaline sort.

TABLE F2: Splash area and missile type for grenade-like weapons

Volume	Area of effect*	"Rock" type **
¼-½ pint	1' diameter	medium
1-2 pints	3' diameter	medium
3-4 pints	4' diameter	large
5-6 pints	5' diameter	very large

* Assumes that the liquid is not too viscous to splash.
** Prepared grenade-like missiles are not thrown at any penalty, but others may be treated as "rocks" of appropriate class (1, 2, or 3).

persist beyond the normal duration unless a second saving throw (versus poison) is made at the end of the indicated time, although the pain will fade enough to permit spell casting and the use of psionics. Failure to make this second saving throw indicates that the victim's eyes have suffered lasting damage, and visual impairment will be permanent unless *cure blindness* or *heal* is used to clear up the problem.

In a number of cases, irritants will be useless. Only wet-eyed creatures are vulnerable to such blinding; insects, reptiles such as snakes whose eyes are protected by clear scales, and other "unblinking" opponents are immune. Neither can an attacker blind an opponent who is more than 3 feet taller or who is facing away during that round. A visored helmet makes the wearer immune to this attack form — and note that character

classes prohibited from using poisons also cannot use very strong irritants.

Increasing the volume of material used in an irritant attack does not increase the chance of blinding an opponent, though it will affect the amount of hit-point damage done (if any). See Tables F1 and F2 for this information. Irritants used in grenade-like missiles have no effective chance of blinding opponents, since the target area is small and the defender has more time to react.

Some of the materials in Table E1 might do lethal damage to slimes, jellies, giant slugs, leeches, oozes, and other wet-skinned monsters. If the creature is vulnerable, it will take damage as if hot liquid has been splashed on it. Use Table D for damage determination, treating mild irritants as hot water, strong ones as hot stew or brine, and very strong ones as hot oil, and adjust as

necessary for the amount of irritant. If the irritant in question also does lethal damage to dry-skinned opponents, it will do that damage in addition. These attacks may be made by broadcast (roll "to hit" armor class 10, etc.) or by grenade-like missile.

Grenade-like weapons

Table F1 is an extension of the table of grenade-like missiles included in the DMG (p. 64). For the most part, it lists materials that aren't likely to be brought along for use as weapons. (Nobody in his right mind would *plan* to burn a whole keg of brandy!) As with the table in the DMG, these materials cause burns, either chemical or thermal (the holy/unholy water listed in the DMG causes magical burns).

The most serious burns are caused by the burning oil described in the DMG. To judge by the damage it does (even a splash can kill an ordinary-human) and by the way it lights so easily (a thrown torch will do), the fuel involved must be some sort of distillate, like the petroleum fraction that was probably used in Byzantium's "Greek fire." This would account for the fact that it is so expensive, too — a single pint is worth as much as a good pair of boots or several days' worth of food, according to the *Players Handbook*.

The other fluids that might be used in grenade-like missiles are less harmful. Standard lamp-oil of ancient times was less volatile and expensive than that described in the DMG; the former was fish oil or vegetable oil, having the properties of modern cooking oil. Such oil is harder to light, and easier to put out. If it is to burn an enemy, it must be burning well *before* it is thrown, or it will only make the target slippery. Player characters may be able to get around this limitation, however, by using such spells as *produce flame*. Burning alcohol won't do much damage either, though it can be lit with a thrown torch if the non-alcohol content (assuming a beverage) is low enough for it to burn in the first place. Alcohol doesn't stick like oil does, and this reduces the amount of damage it can do. Finally, only the most powerful corrosives (acids and alkalines) will do as much damage as the acid described in the DMG. Others, not chosen for their lethality, will do damage as indicated in Table F1.

For determining range, the number of prepared missiles which may be fired per round, and container damage (if the container is hard), grenade-like missiles are treated as rocks, as indicated in Table F2. For containers of non-standard size, increase or decrease the amount of damage done by a factor of two for each change in size class (fractions rounded down). Use the figures in Table F1 and the DMG as the basis for this calculation. Any extra damage is spread over the rounds following contact: a monster hit with a two-pint volume of the oil described in the DMG will take 2-12 points of damage on each of the first and second rounds, and 1-6 points of damage on each of the third and fourth rounds. Note

that the amount of damage taken from a splash does *not* increase with the volume of the container, although the splash radius does. Individuals who weigh less than 100 pounds may not use very large grenade-like weapons, any more than they can use the largest rocks.

A character who has been hit by flaming or corrosive liquid may take countermeasures to reduce the damage. If the liquid is on fire, damage may be halved for the round, and any further damage prevented, if the flames are smothered in a cloak or blanket. For any of the liquids in Table F1 or in the table in the DMG, damage for the round may be reduced to that for a splash hit if the affected individual enters a sufficiently large body of water (naturally, this will also prevent further damage). Such action precludes any others for the round on which they are attempted.

Leaping across an area of burning liquid will have the results described on page 65 of the DMG. The amount of damage taken by someone who walks through or stands in the burning material is the same as that of the second-round damage from a thrown container of liquid (1-6 for highly flammable oil, 1-2 for ordinary oil; 1 for alcohol, and 1-4 for pitch).

General information

Availability of materials

The availability of emergency weapons will vary considerably with the locale. In settled areas, the possibilities are nearly endless, and the DM who has not carefully detailed an encounter area beforehand will have to make some snap decisions. Such places as kitchens, barns, smithies, alchemists' laboratories, and construction sites are particularly fertile grounds for characters seeking emergency weapons, and even in the street various items might be snatched from passersby or from nearby buildings, and cobblestones might be pried up if the area is paved and there is sufficient time. The city watch is likely to take a dim view of such foraging, however.

It would be impractical to try to set up detailed rules on the availability of various items, but a few general guidelines may be applied. One thing to keep in mind is that the abundance of certain materials and of certain classes of artifacts is different in a medieval-style culture than in our own. Glass and metal will be less common, for instance. Bottles, buckets, and other containers are likely to be made of wood, leather, clay, or horn instead, glass windows will be rare (and valuable), and tools will be less likely to have blades or points of metal. Sweeteners of all sorts will be less common, and the hot syrup listed in Table D is likely to be found only in the richer kitchens. Many of the irritants listed in Table E1 will only be available at an alchemist's or a spice merchant's place of work rather than being encountered as common household items. Salt may be rare in some places, and is

likely to be found in cakes or coarse grains rather than as a powder, since the vapor-proof containers and dessicants we are accustomed to will be missing. Even such things as lumber sizes will be affected: the 2x4 is used extensively in modern house construction, but it was not always so.

As for the availability of weapons in wilderness areas, really useful ones will be hard to come by. A rock is perhaps the first thing that comes to mind, but finding one might not be so easy. There are some environments (tropical rain forests, marshes, floodplains, or rich prairie lands, for instance) in which it may be impossible to find one at all without a long search, and even where they can be found rocks may not be of the desired size or shape. In general, good rocks will seem scarce when they are needed in a hurry.

The same might be said of natural clubs and staves. In scrubland, in marsh and grassland, or in barren areas, little or no materials will be available, and even in a forest there isn't likely to be a lot of wood just lying about. Windfallen wood will only be common in relatively cool or dry climes (the floor of a tropical rain forest, for instance, is kept free of such debris by a high rate of decay), and even if unrotted wood is found, it is likely to be a large branch or a fallen tree — not the sort of thing one can pick up and swing. If the forest is adjacent to a settled area, the potential clubs and staves may have been gathered up and used to cook someone's dinner. As for live wood, even the strongest individuals will have some difficulty in gathering and preparing it. Most of it will be out of easy reach, all of it will be difficult to remove from its source (green wood tends to bend rather than break), and of course the excess bark and foliage must be trimmed away. Finally, the character who wishes to imitate Little John and convert a sapling into a staff at a single yank is likely to be disappointed. Saplings are only common where the forest is regrowing, and most of them refuse to simply pop out of the ground.

The time required to find and secure a weapon will vary considerably with the circumstances, but whatever time the DM sets it is recommended that some characters be allowed to complete the task in half the usual period. Rangers and druids should have this advantage in wilderness areas, and thieves and assassins should have the same edge in urban settings.

Fabrication of weapons

Given suitable materials and a reasonable amount of spare time, a character may manufacture a weapon with which he is proficient. A knife blade might be lashed to a pole to make a spear, for instance, or nails might be driven through a large, stout piece of wood (lashings would be required to keep it from splitting) to make a crude morningstar. Such weapons will usually be class 2 types, but if the character making one has secondary skills appropriate to the task, then class 1 weapons are possible.

Stone implements may be "primitive," but they are not easy to make. No character will be able to fashion a decent stone blade or point unless he has the unlikely secondary skill of flint-knapping.

Some spells may allow the creation of weapons from available materials. The particulars of this will vary, but no weapon thus constructed will be better than class 1.

Weapon proficiency

It is recommended that the restrictions as to which character classes can use which weapons be relaxed when it comes to emergency weapons, so long as the standard non-proficiency penalties are observed: a magic-user may certainly choose to pick up a crowbar and flail away with it, but he isn't likely to have much success with a total penalty of -7 "to hit."

Of course, some restrictions must remain. If the DM has ruled that the prohibition against clerics using slashing or poking weapons is absolute, then they will have to use other strategies. Members of the cavalier class (as originally described by Gary Gygax in *DRAGON Magazine* #72) might not use *any* of the items and materials discussed here, rejecting them as too ignoble. A cavalier would probably resort to the use of the vulgar list rather than be caught using a kitchen utensil, and no cavalier would stoop to pick up a rock.

As noted earlier, no character who is a member of a class prohibited from using poisons will use an irritant that can cause permanent blindness. However, a character should not be penalized for expressing an *intention* to use such a substance, since characters would not necessarily know which irritants can cause permanent blindness. If the character throws the acid abruptly, without considering the possible consequences, the DM should apply an appropriate penalty (such as an automatic failure to hit) and then inform the player that this action is not allowed.

Non-proficiency penalties should apply to all of the attack forms described here. Player characters of all classes and subclasses (except the cavalier) might be allowed to become proficient in the weapons and attack forms detailed in this article. Many characters will wish to become proficient with rocks, since such skill would apply to grenade-like missiles as well. Melee and missile uses, and skills with the different sizes of rocks, might be treated separately, but this is not recommended. After all, the official weapon proficiency system does not distinguish between the easy-to-learn crossbow and the difficult longbow, or between the club and the long sword, so it is obviously somewhat flexible. The rock is such a simple weapon that proficiency might apply to all sizes and uses.

Halflings, proficient or otherwise, should be allowed a +3 bonus "to hit" with rocks, an innate advantage just as they have with bows and slings. There is plenty of precedent for this, and it makes the unarmed village halfling a bit less vulnerable.

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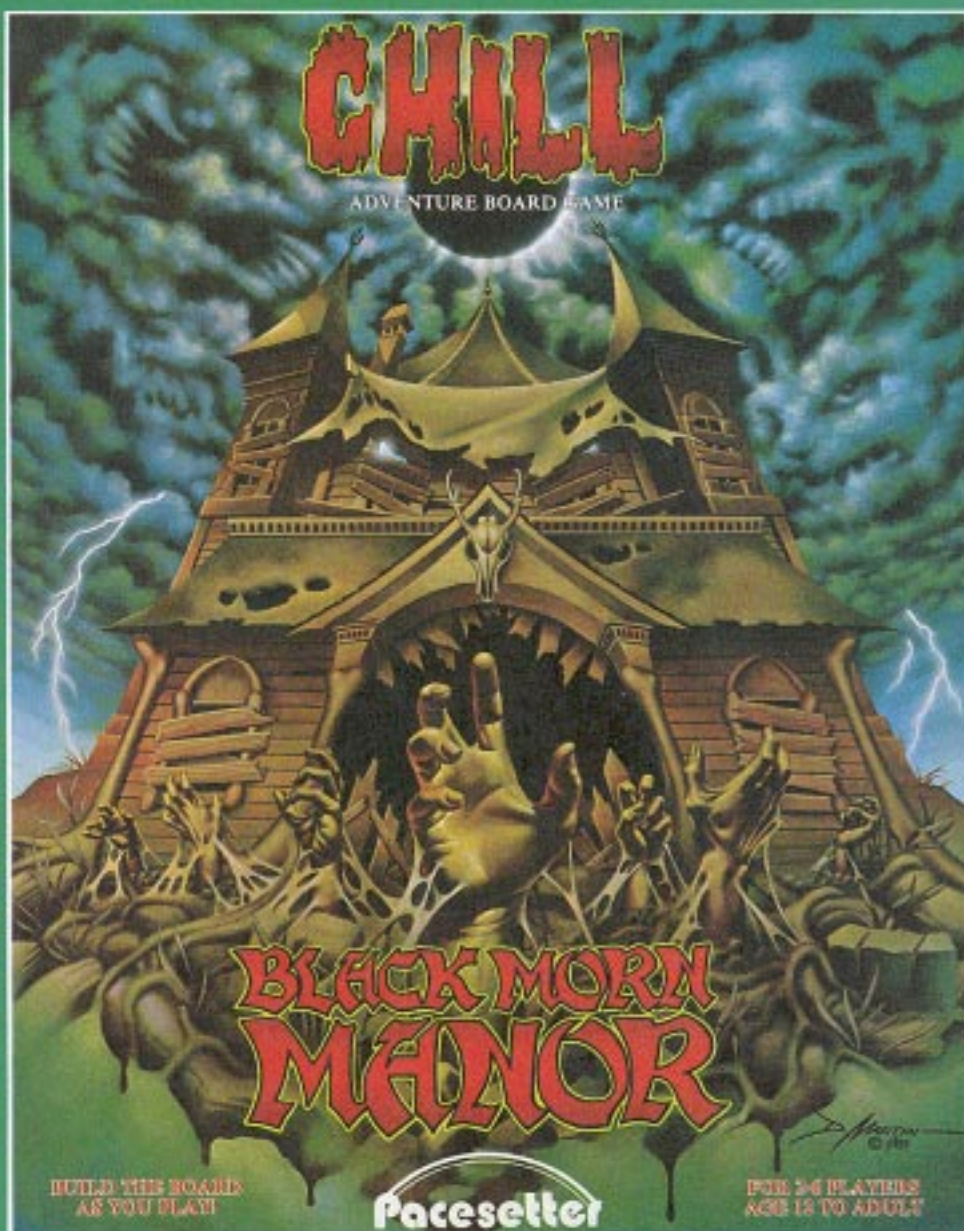
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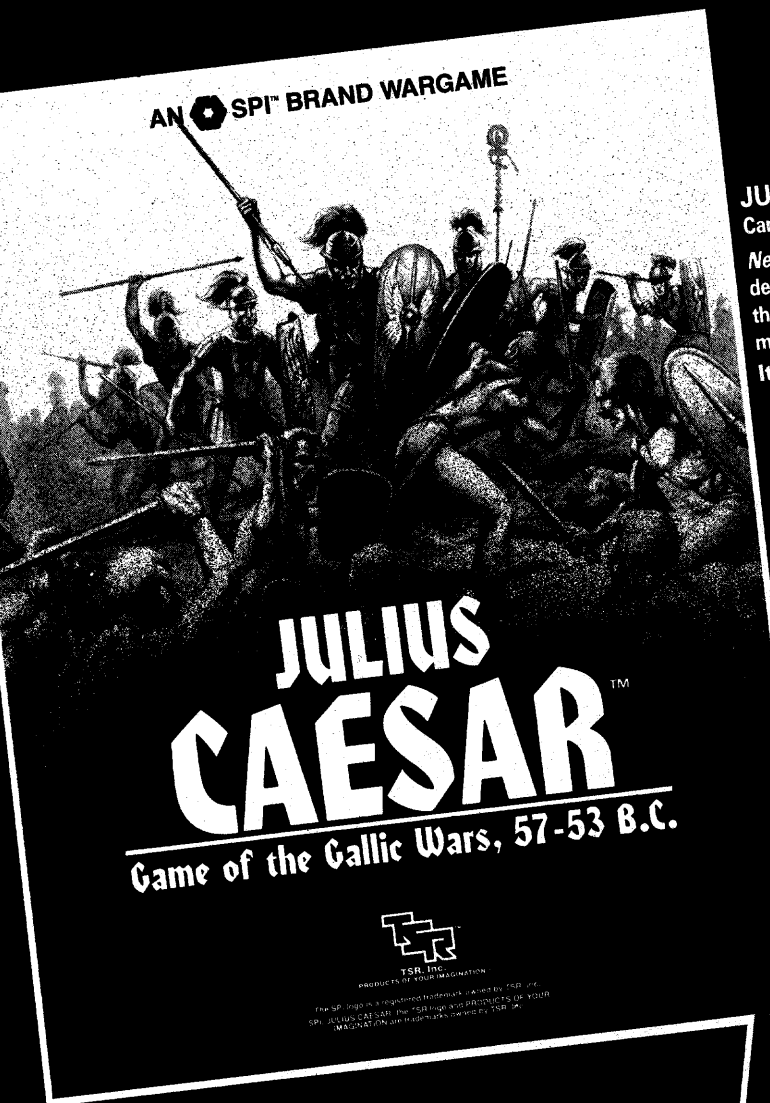




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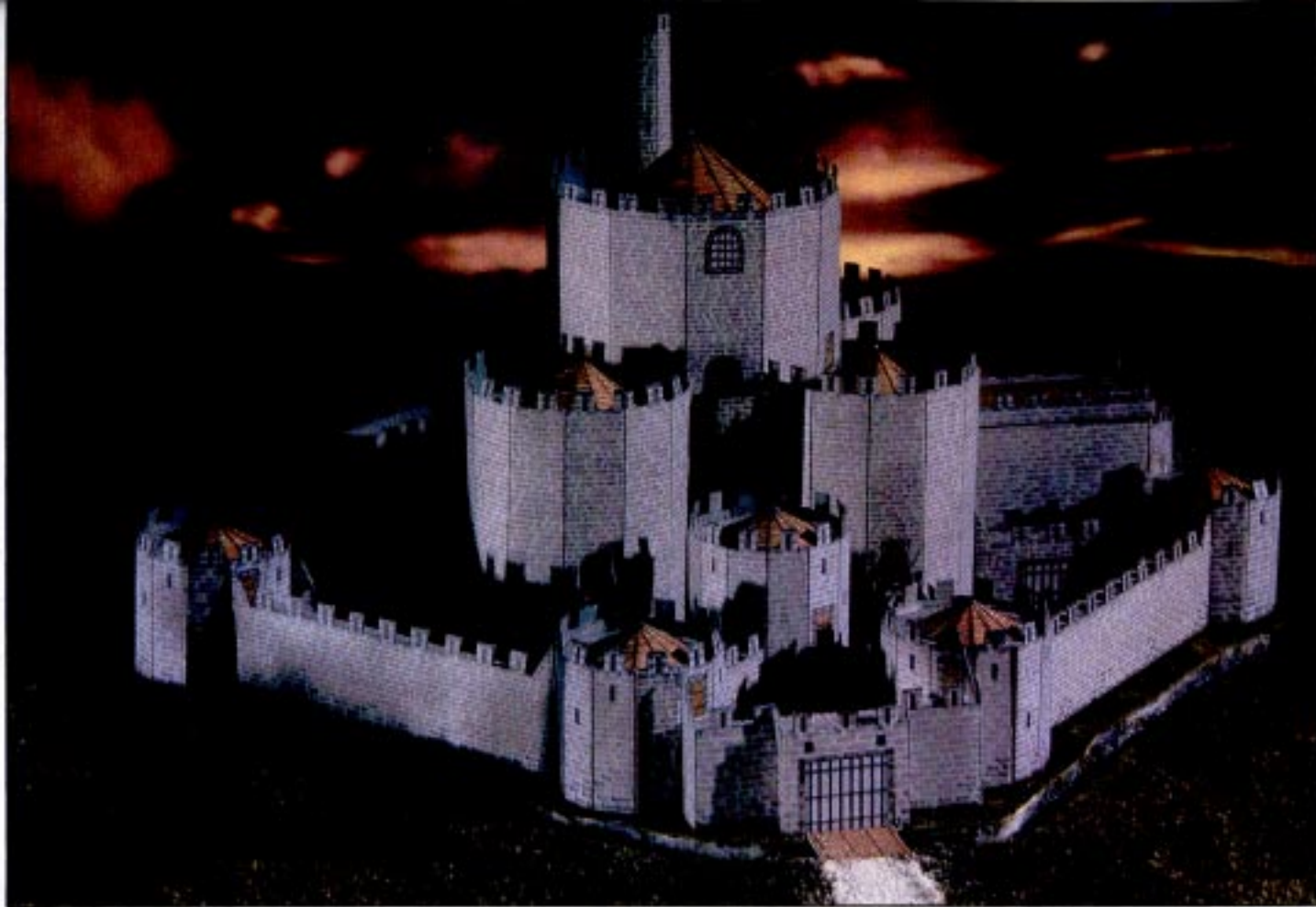
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A tale of three talents

What do a Methodist minister from Indiana, a former sheet metal worker from Lake Geneva, and a high-level photographer from Chicago have in common? Without any one of them, you wouldn't be looking at these pictures right now.

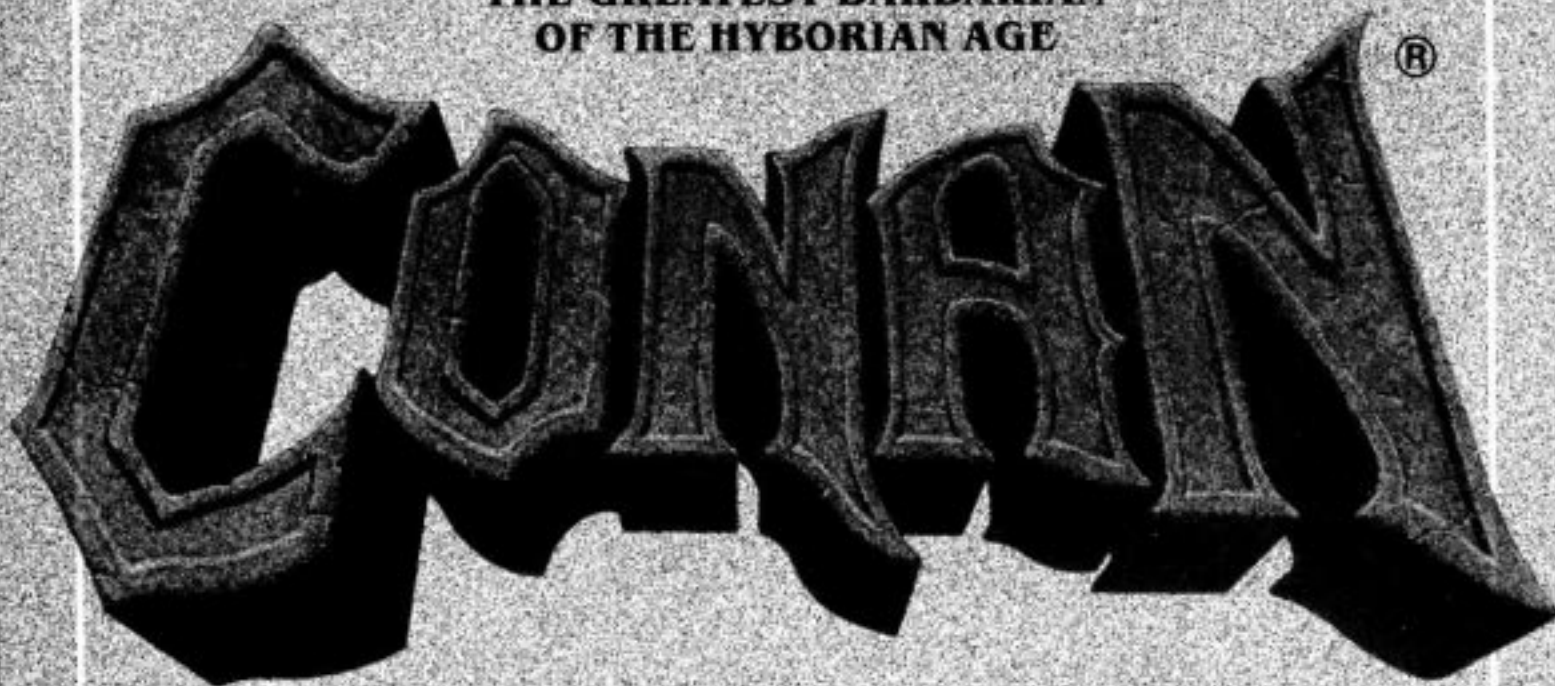
The high-level photographer is Mike Sitkiewicz, who enjoys composing miniature dioramas, putting them against realistic backdrops, and preserving the result on film. We first showcased some of his work in a presentation entitled "Photo finish" in issue #73. The minister is Arthur Collins, who enjoys designing castles such as "Great Stoney," the subject of these photos. And the former sheet metal worker is TSR's own Dennis Kauth, who can take just about anything solid and turn it into a three-dimensional cutout.

Dennis started with Arthur's two-dimensional floor plans and rendered from them a set of cutouts that could be used to construct a replica of the castle. The result appeared in issue #86 (June 1984) of DRAGON® Magazine. And then Mike took over. He assembled his own castle, surrounded it with terrain (complete with the obligatory moat), and photographed it against projected backgrounds like an early-morning sky and a lightning storm that help to make the castle look every bit as realistic as we hoped it would be. He was pleased to share the finished product with us, and we are proud to present it to you.



Photographs by Mike Sitkiewicz

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Only train when you gain

A different way to handle the in-between times

by David B. Reeder

Anyone who has played the ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS® game for any length of time has heard about, or possibly played in, a campaign where characters attain tremendously high levels and wander about killing arch devils and making friends with gods. These “Monty Haul” campaigns, where characters are armed with artifacts, M-16s, and Star Trek phasers, are clearly abuses of the AD&D® gaming system. They quickly grow stale as either the ultra-powerful player characters grow tired of defeating hordes of demons and dragons in one afternoon, or the Dungeon Master runs out of new challenges.

However, an examination of the experience system in the AD&D game shows how some of these “giveaway” campaigns start and how one can prevent them. It seems to take forever for beginning characters to become 2nd or 3rd level, so the players pressure the DM to alter the scope of the game. This makes the game easier and more fun, so the DM continues to give more treasure for facing weaker opponents, and another Monty Haul campaign is born.

Once the players get past the lower levels, these abuses are no longer needed, but they continue because everyone is used to them. Before long, the situation gets out of hand and the Monty Haul campaign grows to maturity.

Take Khalim, a 1st-level dwarven fighter, as an example of how difficult it is for new characters to become 2nd level. Khalim sets out from his mountain home to seek his fortune. He makes it through the mountains and forest to the nearest town without any complications. Once there, he joins six other beginning adventurers who are also looking for a little excitement and monetary gain.

They hear of an abandoned keep taken over by a horde of goblins and other dark creatures about a week’s travel west of the town; they equip themselves and set off. After several forays into the dungeon and the trip through the wilderness to the dungeon and back again, Khalim returns to the town with a few new scars, enough goods and treasures to give every member of the party 680 gold pieces, and 2,135 experience points for himself — enough for him to become 2nd level.

The Dungeon Master, who, although relatively inexperienced, plays by the rules, turns to p. 86 in the DMG and reads the section on gaining experience levels. He must examine Khalim’s actions and evalu-

ate how well he performed in relation to his alignment. The number of weeks Khalim must train depends on how well he followed his alignment.

Khalim has behaved perfectly. He led his party well, used his dwarven abilities to detect a trap, and, while he never hung back from a good fight, he made sure never to attack anyone who might be of good alignment. A rating of “excellent” means Khalim needs only one week of training to become 2nd level. All he must do is find a higher-level fighter who will train him. The standard cost for training a 1st-level character is 1,500 gp per week. If no higher-level fighter is available, he can train himself, but it will take two weeks and the materials necessary will cost 3,000 gp. While grateful that his performance was rated as excellent, Khalim does not have 1,500 gp. He might be able to serve as a henchman in exchange for training, but that would split up the successful adventuring party of which he is a member.

Khalim is not as bad off as the cleric who refused to heal another member because of an earlier argument. He is so far off his alignment track that he will have to receive four weeks of training — which will cost him 6,000 gp, more money than these new characters have ever seen. The cleric could throw in his robes and live a very happy life as a merchant if he had 6,000 gp.

Khalim’s party discusses the problem and decides to go out in search of more treasure, knowing it will be a while before they will all become 2nd level. The DMG (p. 86) stresses that they cannot gain additional experience points while waiting until they can pay for the training: “Once a character has points which are equal to or greater than the minimum number necessary to move upward in experience level, no further experience points can be gained until the character actually gains the new level.” When they find this out, the players in the group become even more distressed.

To make matters worse, when they have a chance to become 3rd level, the cost for each week of training will be 3,000 gp. This means that for Khalim to become 3rd level, he will have had to pay 4,500 gp: 1,500 to become 2nd level and 3,000 to become 3rd level. Khalim has to acquire this much gold — over and above any gold pieces that he can translate into experience points — to “pay his way” to 3rd level. When he reaches the experience-point ceiling for a given level, he has to continue adventuring to gather the gold to finance his training.

The time it takes for characters to collect their training money is time wasted, in effect. They cannot gain experience points — even though they continue to use their skills and may even have to risk their lives — and any treasure they find will either have to be sold to pay for their training or for their daily upkeep; food, lodging, clothing, spell components, and weapons take some of their needed earnings. Only a limited number of monsters exist that are a fair match for a group of 1st-level characters, so being stuck at 1st level becomes repetitive and boring. It seems that, properly played, a 1st-level character will not reach 2nd level for a long time.

The DM, who sees that he is losing the players’ interest, realizes he must do something. It is at this point that he takes the first step toward a Monty Haul campaign. Whether from the players’ urgings to do something and stop being “unfair,” or as the DM’s own idea, the next group of orcs the characters kill happened to be guarding a chest full of 8,000 gp, instead of the normal copper or silver, and a magic item that can be sold for additional gold. By some coincidence, this is just enough money to pay for everyone’s training.

This may not seem like a terrible transgression, but when the characters need training to become 3rd level, the DM will have to give them more gold. Normally, low-level characters should be given copper and silver treasures so they will have something to look forward to — gold and magic. Giving away gold and gems this early in the game will disrupt its balance. If gold is given away in large amounts, magic generally flows much more freely as well, allowing characters to grow ultra-powerful and creating a Monty-Haul campaign that quickly becomes tiresome for both DM and players.

How should a DM find a happy medium between a game that is so difficult that it drags and a game that is so easy it is not worth playing? A simple change in the frequency of character training can take care of this problem, making the game easier to play while still being realistic.

It seems a little unrealistic that characters must train between every level. What does a character gain between 1st and 2nd level? Fighters do not gain a new weapon proficiency, magic-users or clerics do not gain new spells, and even monks do not gain any abilities.

The only constant benefit of advancing in levels is the gaining of new hit points. But

one does not "learn" to have more hit points as the result of training. In contrast, characters can improve their lot in other ways when they advance from one level to the next — ways in which they actually do learn something, such as how to use a different weapon or how to cast more powerful spells.

When a character's abilities are improved or expanded from one level to the next, he must receive instruction and training to be able to master the new skills. But since new abilities are not gained at every level, why should characters have to train every level? If a fighter does not have the opportunity of attaining proficiency with a new weapon between 1st level and 2nd level, why does he need additional training with weapons he already knew how to use? If practice makes perfect, then he has just had a whole level's worth of practice in the weapons and abilities he possesses.

The same goes for magic-users. A 1st-level spell caster with a book of six spells cannot use any new spells when he becomes 2nd level, but he can use the old spells more often. This extra number of spells should be attributed to the practice he's gained during 1st level, not to a one-week training period.

Characters should only have to undergo training when they gain a new ability. For lighters, thieves and monks, this would be every time they gain a new weapon proficiency. For magic-users and clerics, this would be before the level at which they gain

the ability to cast a new level of spell.

Instead of training before every level, fighters, paladins and rangers, who gain a new weapon proficiency every three levels, would have to receive training before becoming 4th, 7th, and 10th level. After 10th, this training can be in the form of self-conducted training and/or study, as the DMG says. For fighters and paladins, 7th level is also when they can start attacking three times every two rounds, so the training is doubly appropriate.

For thieves and assassins, this training would be done after the character had accumulated enough points to become 5th level and again before 9th level. Training after 9th level can be done by the character, without a teacher.

Unlike fighters, thieves and assassins have abilities which do change at every level — their chances to successfully complete any of the special thieving abilities. Picking pockets, moving silently, and the other thieving skills are abilities that a thief has at 1st level. They become better at these functions every level, as a fighter becomes better with a broad sword each level, but they are not new abilities. Training is only needed when something new is introduced, such as a new weapon.


Thieves and assassins can often receive training at their guild. While many player-character thieves wander too much to belong to a guild, having a home base to return to is always a good idea. In less

densely inhabited areas and small kingdoms, fighters may have a hard time finding another fighter of sufficient level to train them, but often even the smallest city supports a thieves' guild.


The monk, the other class that needs training each time a new weapon is mastered, should receive training after every other level: at 3rd level, 5th level, 7th level, etc. After 7th level, a higher-level monk is not needed to train the character. Although the monk does gain a number of other abilities as he rises in level, these are not the kind of abilities that can be obtained by training. Some of the monk's abilities are made possible by his strong physiology, such as immunity to diseases, poison, *haste* or slow spells, and the ability to heal himself. His other abilities come from his mind: masking from ESP self-induced catalepsy, resistance to *telepathic* and *mind blast* attacks, and immunity to *geas* and *quest* spells. These abilities come from the stringent lifestyle a monk must adopt and maintain; they cannot be taught *per se*.

Spell casters are a different story. Magic-users and illusionists have very little use for weapons; as they reach higher levels, the need to clutch a dagger or a staff diminishes even further. Clerics and druids, on the other hand, depend on their weapons for offense and their spells for defense.

Magic-users and illusionists need training only before the level at which they would gain a new level of spell. This means magic-



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(From page 6)

NPC lose the point of armor class for the shield, he loses the +3 as well, resulting in a net advantage of +4 to hit for the player character. The situation could easily be reversed as well. The effect in this case is the same as if the character was attacking from behind, negating all bonuses due to the shield.

Fighters seem to benefit the most from the distinction of handedness, but it can easily be seen that the same arguments apply to clerics as well. And there are situations when the distinction does not make any difference. The techniques involved when using a two-handed weapon cancel any advantage a left-handed character would normally have. And, as pointed out above, any character fighting with two weapons would lose the advantage.

My opinions on this matter were backed up by discussions with several members of the local chapter of the SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism). They all agreed that the left-handed person has an advantage over the "normal" (right-handed) person. One person described the feeling as he was going down after one blow:

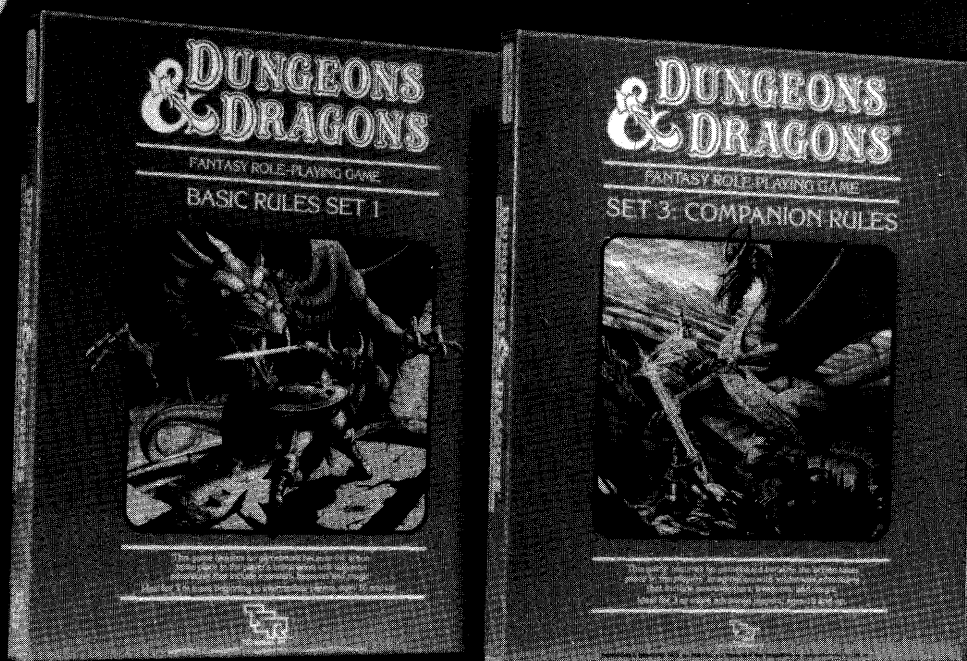
... and then I noticed that he was swinging with his left hand."

The final decision on whether to use this or not is, of course, up to the individual DM. The system is simple, so it does not detract from play, yet it adds an extra bit of personality to the character. When it was first proposed to me, I jumped at it, and I have used it ever since.

David G. Rathbun
Baton Rouge, La.

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users need training when they qualify for 3rd level, 5th level, 7th level, 9th level, 12th level, 14th level, 16th level, and 18th level. At 12th level and above, the magic-user can accomplish the training on his own.

Illusionists must receive training when they qualify for 3rd, 5th, 8th, 10th, 12th, and 14th levels. Once they reach 10th level, as it says in the DMG, illusionists do not need a higher-level illusionist to help them train.

Although clerics and druids must train when they receive new weapons, as well as when new levels of spells are received, the frequency of training for them is not that much greater than that for magic-users and illusionists. It is the greatest for druids, but this is because they progress in spell levels, so rapidly.

A cleric should receive training before becoming 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 16th, and 17th level, and every four levels after that. After 9th level, a cleric can study without the aid of a higher-level cleric. A druid must be trained before becoming 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 9th, 11th, 12th, and 13th level, and does not need to be trained by a higher-level druid after reaching 12th level.

With this system of character training, costs for training are still figured out as shown in the DMG. The weekly cost of training is the level of the character needing the training multiplied by 1,500 gp. Characters are still rated by the Dungeon Master as excellent, superior, fair or poor. Charac-

ters who are rated superior or excellent are still able to train themselves, though this takes twice as long and costs twice as much. This new system would make the game easier and more fun, and characters should be able to afford their training costs without having to keep big bankrolls.

In this system, Khalim the fighter will not need training until he is about to become 4th level. If he is rated as excellent, the training will cost him 4,500 gp. To become 4th level, Khalim will need to accumulate more than 8,000 xps in addition to the training fee. It still won't be an easy task to come up with the 4,500 gp — but under the system in the DMG he would need twice this amount to pay for all his training up to 4th level.

Even if Khalim does not save enough gold to pay for his training while he's out earning experience points, he will only have to "waste" time before 4th and 7th level, not before every level. And the DM won't feel obliged to make gold easy to find, which lessens the chance of things developing into a Monty Haul campaign.

The hardest challenge facing a character may be finding someone to train him. Any character who is training another one must have successfully completed the training period following the one in which the student is now involved. This means a magic-user training another to use 3rd-level spells must himself be able to use 4th-level spells; a fighter learning his fifth weapon (4th

level) must be trained by one who has mastered his sixth weapon (7th level).

While fighters and magic-users of 7th level might not be hard to find in many campaigns, 12th-level magic-users and 10th-level fighters are probably rarer. High-level magic-users tend to lock themselves in their towers to develop spells and enchant items. High-level fighters are often busy protecting their keeps or raising armies to fight for their lord. Since few schools exist for high-level characters, player characters often must seek out these busy lords and wizards and convince them to train lower-level characters.

This can set the stage for some interesting adventures. A high-level magic-user who would rather spend his time creating a new spell might agree to train another magic-user in return for cleaning out a nest of harpies or ankhkegs that have been bothering farmers on the western part of his lands. A fighter that cannot afford to leave his keep might be able to use the services of a lower-level fighter to perform some task in return for his training.

Thus, the benefit of these different rules about training extends into the campaign at large — keeping costs down by lowering the amount of gold an adventurer needs to advance in his profession, and keeping interest high at the same time by providing material for different sorts of missions that those well-trained characters will be willing — and able — to take on.

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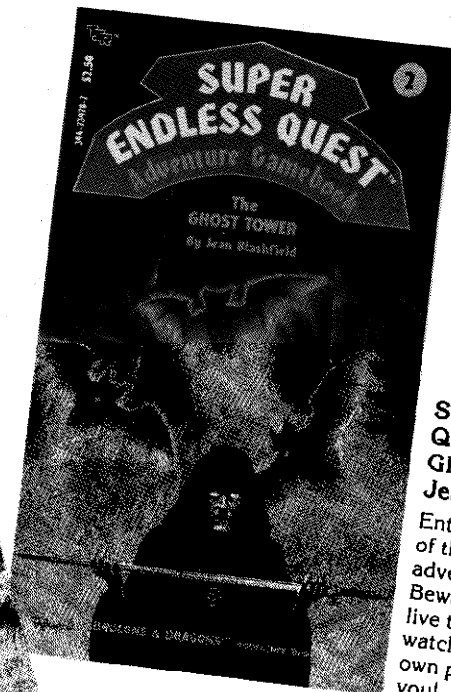
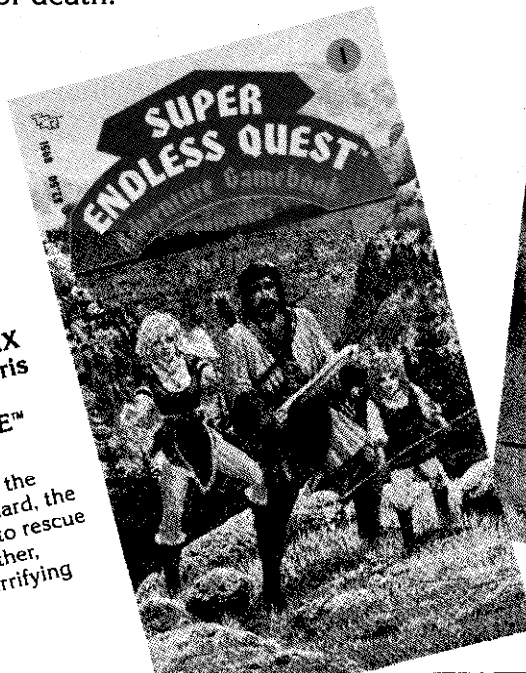
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The ecology of the

GORGON

by Ed Greenwood

"The gorgon," Elminster told me severely, "is best avoided."

I nodded. And waited. He eyed me for two or three puffs of his pipe, and then sighed. "I expect you will heed that advice — and," he added with a wry smile, "I also expect you will want an explanation."

"Oh, yes," I responded. "And who better to provide that explanation than yourself?"

"Very well," said the sage, satisfied that I had played my part by showing the proper respect for him and his knowledge. "I will tell you what I know, and what I have heard, about the gorgon. The folk where I grew up called it the 'stone bull.' They killed one by loosing a rust monster upon it and thus forcing it into a dead-end cavern, and then unleashing several volleys of arrows — but several members of the hunting party did not return to share in the glory of their accomplishment. I know of no tales about the gorgon that have a happy ending."

"Indeed," I chimed in. "Still, there are a lot of unanswered questions about the beast."

"Aye," Elminster agreed. "I have with me an excerpt from a traveller's diary, and the researches of several colleagues of mine, notably Asheyron of Arabel, who possesses an amulet that prevents petrification. He tells me, by the way, that a gorgon's breath smells like stewed cabbage."

The excerpt is reproduced below, followed by footnotes that sum up what Elminster had to say about Asheyron's research (and that of Elephras of Melvaunt and Kiiragar of Port Llast). From the way he expressed himself, it is obvious that Elminster hates gorgons; in fact, he revealed that he once lost a pet dog to one. I asked him what he would do if he met a gorgon, and



he indicated a piece of jewelry around his neck, half-hidden by his beard. "This is a thing of magic — a necklace of missiles," he said. "This big bauble near the center is my gorgon-killer."

From the diaries of the adventurer and naturalist Djaril Phylapur:

The gorgon is a bull-like creature greatly feared by travellers in the wilderness hereabout, because of its fearsome breath. Four times each day a gorgon can turn creatures to stone by its breath, using this attack whenever it meets creatures it senses to be dangerous, such as man.¹ Certain beasts (notably the xorn, pech, piercer, rust mon-

ster, earth elemental, and the gorgon itself) are known to be immune to this effect, and other such immunities doubtless remain to be discovered. Gorgons will ignore an apparently petrified victim, instinctively realizing that it is no longer dangerous. Some have been known to escape the creature by feigning death — but just as many others have tried this tactic and failed, because they were unable to keep completely still, and their deception was found out. Even the mere blink of an eye at the wrong time will alert the gorgon to the fact that its quarry is still alive — for the moment.

Gorgons are omnivorous, subsisting on carrion, vegetable material of all types, and small creatures which they gore or trample but do not petrify, seeing them as food and not potential adversaries. A lone, unarmed or weak human or humanoid would be considered food, and attacked as such; a creature that is petrified is a meal forever lost.

The breathing of the petrifying vapors is entirely a voluntary act, these vapors being produced by and stored in an internal organ opening into the roof of the mouth. The corpse of a gorgon is often still dangerous for hours after the beast's death, as a result of the slow seepage of this gas from the still-active organ, or the sudden explosion of a full cloud of gas that will envelop anyone or anything that disturbs the body. After this seepage has run its course, the gas-producing mechanism within the gorgon's body is inert and useless, so no one has succeeded in storing or synthesizing this gas, and its nature and method of manufacture remain a mystery.

Gorgons are always in an irritable mood,

and quick to attack.² They will kill prey whenever it is encountered (even if their appetites are presently sated, in which case they may return to devour the prey at a later time). They lair in wilderness caverns, canyons, or "badland" areas, and there they keep treasure acquired from prey. The spoils found in a gorgon lair will be chiefly coinage and other metallic treasure, which is useful to distract the attention of would-be gorgon-killers (including rust monsters) that might stumble upon such a hoard.

The skin of a gorgon is covered with close-fitting, irregularly shaped metal scales. The scales are actually composed of impure iron; in order to maintain their strength and durability, a gorgon must derive substantial amounts of iron from its diet, chiefly from green plants and the blood of mammals. The gorgon cannot consume actual metal, in either raw or refined form (such as a suit of armor), and accumulates such metal as part of its "treasure," as described above.

The scales are coated with a waxy secretion that is constantly drying out and being worn away, and at the same time is continually replenished by the beast's internal processes (exuding from the cartilaginous seams between the scales). This coating keeps a gorgon's scales from rusting due to rain or dampness, and — coupled with the irregular shapes and curves of the scales — makes a gorgon difficult to grapple, and causes many blows to glance off its hide.

The plates are rather soft (being easily marked by weapon-blows, even if those blows do not actually harm the creature), but are both thick and durable; they will not crack under crushing blows. The scales are useful as a source of iron for smelting (although other, better sources are usually available), but cannot be used directly for protection — for example, as bucklers — because they are too small and too soft. A gorgon plate of average size might bring a price of 10 copper pieces, or perhaps more if it is sold in an area where metal is scarce and in great demand.

The creature most feared by the gorgon is the rust monster, and gorgons rarely delve deeply into subterranean areas as a result. Rust monsters are themselves well armored against a gorgon's hooves and horns, and view gorgon scales as a desirable and substantial meal. At the touch of their antennae, a scale will rust and fall off³, and although a biting, kicking gorgon will rarely let a rust monster munch happily upon the result (usually biting off its antennae or overturning the rust monster with a horn and then running away), the damage is then done. For their part, rust monsters can move more rapidly than gorgons can, and will pursue one, or even a group of gorgons, fearlessly.

Gorgons often hunt⁵ together in small bands (of two mated⁶ pairs, three males plus a female that one or all of them are court- ing, four or fewer young males, and so on).

They wander a wide range, and typically know of most caverns (potential lairs) within a sixty-mile radius. If large numbers of human, demi-human, or humanoid creatures begin to move into a gorgon-inhabited area, solitary gorgons and isolated pairs not raising young will gather in the more inaccessible and labyrinthine caverns for mutual protection.

Notes

1. The breath weapon of a gorgon consists of a truncated cone-shaped cloud of visible, misty grey-green vapors. For reasons not fully understood, this cloud exists simultaneously on the Astral, Ethereal, and Prime Material Planes, and has the same effect upon creatures in any of those environments that are within the area the cloud occupies. Any creature enveloped by the cloud of vapors (which billows out with some force to fill a conical area, ½" wide at the gorgon's maw to a maximum diameter of 2" and a maximum length of 6", within 2 segments) must save versus petrification to avoid being turned to stone (which takes effect in 1-4 segments thereafter, and is permanent unless somehow counteracted at a later time). The vapors hang in the air throughout the round after the round in which they were expelled, clearly visible, and are effective until the end of this second round, whereupon they will have dissipated sufficiently to lose their petrifying power. Gorgon breath does not work underwater, and will be harmlessly destroyed by the whirlwind of an air elemental, a wind walker, or similar force of moving air. A *gust of wind* spell or similar effect will merely shift an intact breath cloud from 1" to 6" in the direction of the gust. A creature who has successfully saved versus a cloud of vapors can remain in, re-enter, or move through its confines without fear of petrification — but any creature entering a particular gorgon-breath cloud must make a save; i.e., if characters are battling a gorgon who breathes in four successive rounds, they must save four times, even if the clouds are all breathed in the same area and the characters do not change their locations. If the breath weapons of two or more gorgons overlap, however, a creature within their confines need make only one save, not two or more.

A spell caster employing a statue spell prior to encountering breath vapors is immune to petrification while in statue form, as is a druid within a tree, and any character(s) in an extra-dimensional space created by a *rope trick*, *portable hole*, or similar magic.


Petrified creatures are immobile and have no sense of the passage of time, nor awareness of their surroundings (they are effectively deaf, dumb, and blind, but still technically alive). Some soon become insane; most sleep, retreating from conscious awareness into an endless dream-world. They may be conversed with by means of *stone tell*, or mentally communicated with by *ESP* or *telepathy* magic and similar

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pionic powers. A stone to flesh spell will free a petrified creature, but *dispel magic* will not. "Stoned" creatures are immune to all illusion and vision-related magics (e.g., *demi-shadow monsters*), and cannot be affected by fire, electricity, any death magic, or spoken *power words* — but a *dig*, *shatter*, or *disintegrate* spell will destroy such a creature instantly.

2. In battle, gorgons breathe, gore with horns, strike with hooves, or bite — listed in order of preference; only one type of attack is possible per round.

Goring (or ripping and slashing) with horns does 2-12 hit points of damage (-1 per die of damage if the target is bearing a shield or wearing plate mail in such a location or manner as to lessen the strike). On a natural "to hit" roll of 20, a gorgon has impaled a victim with its horns; the character takes maximum damage (12 hp) on the round in which impaling occurs, and may (50% chance) remain impaled for one round afterward, taking another 2-8 points of damage if this is the case. (A gorgon can mount another attack in the round during which a victim remains impaled, but obviously this cannot be an attack with the horns.)

Gorgons can readily stand and walk about on their hind legs as well as on all fours (movement rate is the same in either stance), and can rise up on their hind legs to lash out with their front hooves. In most cases (75% of the time), the gorgon will only strike with one front hoof, using the other foreleg for balance. Its hooves do 2-8 points of damage apiece so that a creature that is trampled may suffer as much as 8-32 (2-8 times 4) points of damage if all four hooves hit. The gorgon's rear hooves can lash out just as their front ones do, but the creature will only use this attack form if it is assaulted from behind — and obviously it cannot lash out with front hooves and rear hooves both in the same round.

A gorgon rarely bites in battle unless its breath weapon is expended (or the beast has chosen not to use it) and its horns are gone or encumbered (usually by another, impaled creature). A gorgon bite does 1-3 points of damage; this attack mode is often employed to finish off a victim that has been incapacitated

or rendered unconscious by its other physical attacks, and which the gorgon intends to use as a meal.

3. The attack of a rust monster upon a gorgon only affects the one or two body plates that are touched by the rust monster's antennae; the non-metallic, cartilage-like seams between plates prevent the rusting effect from traveling any farther than the plate(s) it actually hits. A rusted, corroded plate will immediately (in the same round) detach from the skin underneath and fall off. A gorgon cannot re-grow or otherwise replace body plates that fall off (due to rusting or any other effect). A young gorgon's plates will grow in area and thickness as the creature matures, but will always be the "original equipment"; i.e., there is no moulting or shedding process involved.

The repeated loss of body plates can render a gorgon more vulnerable to physical attacks; whenever 20% or more of the surface area of a gorgon's body is devoid of metal plates, there is a chance equal to that percentage that a strike against the gorgon's body will be made against AC 8 (the unprotected area) instead of AC 2 (the creature's normal armor class).

4. A gorgon can see in normal light as well as a man does, and simultaneously use normal vision out to a 6" distance on the Astral and Ethereal Planes. It has infravision out to a range of 8", on the Prime Material Plane only. A gorgon can smell most creatures within 3", and will always try to

confront (or in some way react to) a creature it detects by smell — whether it is a potential meal, a strong adversary who must be fought off or killed, or a rust monster, which must be led to another source of metal and then fled from as fast as possible.


5. Male and female gorgons are identical in size and powers and are externally indistinguishable (except to other gorgons). A mated pair will stay together for 2-6 years and will reproduce approximately once a year (more often if food is plentiful, less often if it is not). The female will bear 1-3 offspring 6-8 months after mating, and will keep to the lair (her mate hunting for her) from the fourth month of pregnancy until she gives birth. A newborn gorgon is able to move and attack for itself at one month of age; young are size S, have 3 hit dice, can breathe a half-normal-size cloud of vapors twice per day, and do half normal damage on all physical attacks. At 3 months of age a young gorgon has grown to size M and 5 hit dice, and can use its breath weapon (still a half-sized cloud) three times per day. A gorgon reaches full adult size and powers within 5-7 months after being born. It will achieve maturity (the ability to mate) at the age of two years, at which time it will leave its parents' lair (if it has not done so already). Very rarely, a gorgon will mate with a chimera to produce a gorgimera (see *Monster Manual II* and *DRAGON®* issue #94), but the two creatures will not habitually consort together for any length of time.

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For a fuller background

Heritage in the DRAGONQUEST™ game

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Sooner or later, either as a player of the DRAGONQUEST™ game or as a referee, you're going to encounter a character whose background gives you considerable pause: a halfling member of the greater nobility, perhaps, or an elf whose family are peasants — or maybe a fire giant descended from pirates.

To be sure, in the Heritage section of the rules (Section 8), it states that for nonhumans, the social status role will give the equivalent ranking in human society, and that the referee and the player should work out the details of the character's standing in his or her own society. Not to put too fine a point on it, poppycock. The player typically doesn't know enough about the campaign background to boldly make statements concerning the society of the nonhuman races, and the referee — particularly if confronted by a large and/or changing cast of players — very likely doesn't have the time to give lectures on culture to individual players.

A faster, more efficient way to preclude some of the odder combinations of race and heritage is to revise the Social Status Table (8.1) to key it by race. Incidentally, this provides a chance to add a couple of common-in-fiction backgrounds that got left off. The result is Table 8.1b, which accompanies this article. This also calls for some minor modifications to the Order of Birth Table (8.2), as well as the Money Multiplier. And as long as I've got everyone's attention, we'll add something new: an Experience Modifier. (This should not be confused with the Experience Multiple from 6.3.) When the player is consulting Table 8.5 to determine the character's initial allotment of experience points, that allotment should be multiplied by the Experience Modifier listed in Table 8.2b (also contained herein). This reflects the fact that people growing up in different backgrounds will tend to learn more or less the ways of the world because of those backgrounds.

One last thing: I've always been troubled by the image of, say, the triumphant entry of the Prince into his realm, accompanied by the throng madly screaming, "Long live the Greater Nobility!" It seems like there should be some titles to go along with Greater and Lesser Noble social classes. And so, if your character is of those social classes, consult Table 8.9 (Noble Ranks) and roll 1D10 to determine the exact title you come with. The title is assumed to be inactive, for whatever reason: plague, war, exile, poor prospects, and so forth. If both

TABLE 8.1b

Social Class	Human	Halfling	Elf	Dwarf	Orc	Giant	Shape Changer
Barbarian	01-10	—	—	—	01-20	01-20	01-15
Slave	11-18	01-05	—	01-05	21-30	—	16-25
Woods Dweller	—	—	0 1 - 4 5	—	—	—	—
Miner	—	—	—	06-35	—	—	—
Peasant	19-25	06-15	—	—	31-40	21-30	26-35
Farmer	26-31	16-35	—	—	—	31-50	35-45
Townsmen	32-38	36-55	—	36-40	—	—	—
Soldier	39-46	—	—	41-50	41-50	—	—
Craftsman	47-53	56-75	46-65	51-65	—	51-65	—
Adventurer	54-63	76-85	66-85	66-75	51-60	66-75	46-65
Bandit	64-70	—	—	76-80	61-75	76-90	66-80
Pirate	71-77	—	—	—	76-85	—	81-85
Merchant	78-84	86-95	—	81-85	86-95	—	86-95
Merchant Prince	85-88	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lesser Nobility	89-97	96-00	86-95	86-95	96-00	91-95	96-00
Greater Nobility	98-00	—	96-00	96-00	—	96-00	—

TABLE 8.2b

Social Class	Money	Experience	Bastard	Legitimate	First
Barbarian	2	1.2	01-10	11-85	86-00
Slave	1	0.9	01-25	26-95	96-00
Woods Dweller	4	1.0	01-10	11-80	81-00
Miner	7	1.0	01-05	06-85	86-00
Peasant	2	0.8	01-30	31-85	86-00
Farmer	4	0.9	01-17	18-81	82-00
Townsmen	5	1.0	01-13	14-92	93-00
Soldier	5	1.1	01-13	14-92	93-00
Craftsman	5	1.0	01-13	14-92	93-00
Adventurer	5	1.2	01-13	14-92	93-00
Bandit	8	1.2	01-15	16-90	91-00
Pirate	8	1.2	01-15	16-90	91-00
Merchant	6	1.0	01-20	21-89	90-00
Merchant Prince	10	0.9	01-24	25-87	88-00
Lesser Nobility	5	0.8	01-27	28-96	97-00
Greater Nobility	10	0.7	01-35	36-98	99-00

the player and the referee are agreeable, adventures might be built around an attempt to regain the lands and status of the title.

The upshot of all these changes should be that your DRAGONQUEST game characters will be more clearly positioned with respect to the society they'll probably be outcasts from anyway. . . .

TABLE 8.9

Noble Titles	Roll	Lesser Noble	Greater Noble.
1-5 Knight (Sir/			Marques
Lady)			(Marchioness)
6-8 Baron (-ess)			Duke (Duchess)
9-10 Count (-ess)			Prince (-ss)

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Pages from the Mages IV

More long-lost magical lore from Elminster

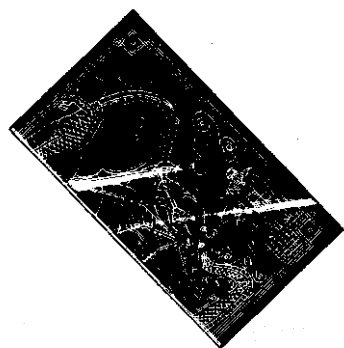
by Ed Greenwood

Elminster sat at ease in my garden, watching bats fly out to hunt in the gathering dusk. His pipe reeked of something worse than usual; a green smoke winking with sparks hung around him. Crickets sang, back in the trees, and both cats prowled, appearing now and then to listen to Elminster. The sage talked for a while (as is his wont) of kings and wars and laws in the Realms, but before long his discourse drifted around (as I knew it would) to magic — magic lost and forgotten, magic new-created or rediscovered, magic dangerous and beautiful. I steered a mug of cocoa into his hand and asked, "But how are all these lost spells known of?"

Elminster snorted. "An' by clumsy words like that ye seek to steer me into spewing out the secrets o' more spellbooks? For shame, lad!"

"Shame? Me?" I replied in mock astonishment.

"Aye — I'll grant that ye and shame are strangers," Elminster grunted. "So I suppose I'll have to be talking. . . . Another four lost but no doubt still extant tomes, then?" The cat that is almost entirely black (Stardust's the name; I didn't name her) leapt into his lap and started to purr. "Aye, indeed," the sage said affectionately, stroking her. (After a few minutes of talk she fell asleep, but I hadn't the heart to tell him.) Culled from the verbal meanderings of the next couple of hours are these four new descriptions of spell books, and their unusual contents, lost but not forgotten:



Bowgengle's Book

Appearance

This slim, black volume is most expertly bound in glossy, tooled, black leather — the best yoxenhide, from the yoke-oxen, or "yoxen," of the plains of Amn — which has been stitched into a full-fitted cover encasing two slabs of slate, and worked on the outside into a repeating pattern of a human

and a dragon confronting each other, each spouting flame at the other. Within are fifty-three sheets of the finest white vellum, all sewn to a spine-cord strip of black leather with spun silk thread, the whole being of the most delicate workmanship. (Several additional pages seem to have been torn out.) The pattern of the covers extends without a break over front, back, and spine, leaving only a lip or border all about the edges of the tome, and an oval plate or raised area in the center of the front cover, which bears the character known as "Bowgengle's Rune," thus:



History and description

Bowgengle of Silverymoon was a mage of gentle speech and manners, loved and revered in the North and the Sword Coast cities in his day, for he believed that magic belonged to all, and all should benefit from it. Many good works were ascribed to his name over the years he wandered the Realms, and legend has rounded out his deeds. Always Bowgengle sought new spells — and he embarked on reckless ventures to gain them, such as the plundering of Raurogoch the black dragon's hoard (slaying that monster with the very magic found in the treasure) and the breaking open of the Wizard-King's tomb, where that legendary mage, now living in lichdom, guarded his spellbooks as fervently as the crumbling bones of his mistresses and his dogs.

And ever Bowgengle gave of his knowledge to all who had the ability, and wrote out spells tirelessly for those who were too young, too sick, or yet unborn. He paid for the hospitality given him on his travels with spells, cast for good ends, and his name is yet remembered with affection and awe. It is often said of a gentle, shy, and well-favored babe that it "has Bowgengle's eyes," and an act of selfless kindness is oftentimes agreed to be properly "of Bowgengle's way."

When he grew old, Bowgengle came to the School of Wonder, founded some years earlier by the mages Myrdon and Salasker, and wrote down his spells for the apprentices there. He passed on his way, and when word came shortly thereafter of his death in

a snowstorm in the high forests, the Masters commanded that Bowgengle's written spells be collected from the apprentices and close-guarded in the library there, for all to see and use. This was done, the book being constructed by elven craftsmen, and the cover depicting a famous scene of Bowgengle's youth: his fiery battle with a red dragon, whom he teased (and enraged) by gouting flame back at it, before he vanquished the beast.

The book did not remain at the School for long, however — demons slew its Masters and most of the apprentices, and set the towers ablaze one crisp winter night (demons, some whispered, summoned by careless or jealous and vengeful novices who lost control of their demonic servitors). The School was no more. Thieves were the first bold enough to venture into the smoking ruin, and one must have found and safely borne away Bowgengle's Book, for it surfaced some years later in Scornubel, identified by the sage Laertilus as amongst the treasures he appraised for Vaerum, the Master Thief. Vaerum, head of a local thieves' guild, soon fell victim to a "grey war" (one of the oft-occurring skirmishes between rival guilds), and the book vanished. Its present fate and whereabouts are unknown, but it is thought by most sages to still exist.

The book's contents are all spells and cantrips in "standard" form (as per the rules in the *Players Handbook* and in E. Gary Gyga's article, "Spell books," in the *Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology*, Volume III) set down one to a page, save for the two unique spells described herein. They appear in the following order: the cantrips *clean*, *dry*, and *bluelight*, and the spells *affect normal fires*, *hold portal*, *identify mending*, *push*, *read magic*, *sleep*, *continual light*, *darkness 15' radius*, *detect evil*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel silence* (unique spell), *ESP forget*, *knock*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *magic mouth*, *rope trick*, *strength*, *wizard lock*, *blink*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *fly*, *hold person*, *infravision*, *Leomund's Tiny Hut*, *lightning bolt*, *protection from evil 10' radius*, *protection from normal missiles*, *slow*, *tongues*, *water breathing*, *Bowgengle's Fleeting Journey* (unique spell), *charm monster*, *confusion*, *dimension door*, *enchanted weapon*, *fire shield* (both versions), *minor globe of invulnerability*, *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*, *remove curse*, *wizard eye*, *Bigby's Interposing Hand*, *cone of cold*, *hold monster*, *passwall*, and *wall of force*.

The two unique spells in Bowgengle's Book are these:

Dispel silence (Abjuration, Alteration)

Level: 2

Range: 0

Casting Time: 2 segments

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: Sphere of 1" radius per level of caster

Components: S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of a hand gesture and the casting into the air of a pinch of powdered diamond (at least 50 gp worth of the crushed gemstone), the spellcaster creates a powerful dweomer that negates existing magical *silence* within the area of effect, and dispels any *silence* created by spell casting or magic-item power within the area of effect for 1 round per level of the spellcaster after the round of casting. Thus, a *dispel silence* cast by a 12th-level wizard would negate (no saving throws allowed) any *silence* cast on him or about his person, and prevent such *silence* from occurring or returning for twelve consecutive rounds after casting. *Dispel magic* will in turn destroy a *dispel silence* dweomer, but *silence* will not return unless cast anew, or if of a permanent (i.e. magic-item function) sort. The dweomer created by this spell is always a sphere centered upon the spellcaster, extending through walls and doors, around intervening objects, and so forth.

Bowgengle's Fleeting Journey (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: 0

Casting Time: 4 segments

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: One being

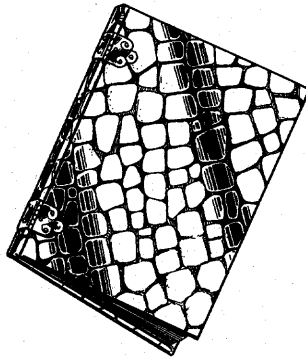
Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By the use of this spell, the caster or another creature touched by the caster (an unwilling creature gains a saving throw to negate the spell) is enabled to teleport to a specific destination viewed and pointed at during spell casting. The location may be up to 1" per level of the caster vertically and 2" per level of the caster horizontally away from the caster's or spell recipient's initial position. The shift in position takes 1 segment, and the caster or spell recipient may remain at the new location for a round (or less, if the spellcaster wills) before being *teleported* back to his or her initial location.

During the time spent in the location *journeyed* to, the caster or recipient can make physical attacks, move about, pick up or leave behind objects, manipulate items, or cast any spell for which components are at hand and which requires a round or less to cast. Note that it is possible for a spell to take effect after the caster *journeys* back to his or her initial position; this, however, cannot happen if the spell cast has an instantaneous duration (such as a *fireball*). If not made earlier, the return journey always

occurs at the end of the round regardless of the caster's or recipient's wishes or state of consciousness (even if dead).

No possibility of error exists in teleportation. If the *journey* is made into an area already occupied by a solid body (unlikely, as the destination must be within the caster's view), or if the area of return is similarly blocked, the journeyer is stunned (unable to cast spells) and displaced into the Astral Plane. Note that the *journey* is a form of teleportation; neither physical nor magical barriers can stop it or the return trip, and a journeyer who is pinned down, constricted, or otherwise physically encumbered will simply vanish from such constraints on the return trip. All that the journeyer carries (save other living creatures, who will simply be left behind) will be teleported with him or her, up to a maximum weight equal to 5,000 gold pieces. The material component of this spell is a small ball of rubber (which may be uncured, just as it comes from the tree). Note that if the destination chosen is beyond the caster's range, the spell will not work; 1 segment is wasted, and a second destination may be pointed at. If it, too, is out of range, nothing occurs, and the spell is wasted.



The Spellbook of Daimos

Appearance

This tome bears no title or inscription, and is fashioned of fine, heavy parchment pages sewn to a waxed cord binding, which is stretched and nailed to an oaken spine, to which in turn are bolted covers of fine bronze, the whole covered with stretched silver "dragonscale." The "Spellbook" weighs heavily and is three hand-lengths broad by four in height. It is as thick as two fingers, bearing within thirty-six pages. A permanent *magic mouth* has been cast upon it; whenever the tome is first touched by any (and every) creature, the *mouth* will appear on the front cover, and a cold, level male voice will speak in Common: "Put me down, or die." There are presently no magical safeguards on the volume to back up this threat, however. The book shows no signs of age or ill use.

History and description

This volume first comes to light in Realmslore some three hundred winters ago, when the caravan-master Muirhar "Duskbrow," an Easterner, crossed Anauroch (The Great Desert) at the head of

a caravan sixty-seven wagons long. The perilous crossing was made safely, but gnoll bands raided the caravan in Bleached Bones Pass. Many were slain before Muirhar's guards overcame the attackers. The gnoll corpses were stripped of weapons and goods before the caravan moved on, and strapped to one such corpse was found a battered leather satchel, obviously looted from an earlier victim. Within it was a note written in Common that said simply, "I have no further use for this or other things of this world. You are my most able apprentice, so it is yours. Use the Shout only in last resort. Daimos."

Muirhar took book and note to the mage Ulthorn of Waterdeep, who kept the tome secret for many years and apparently never used its powers until the night of his death. His apprentice, Rendargallis, who studied the tome under Ulthorn's tutelage, reports that Ulthorn died in a sorcerous duel with a vastly more powerful foe, the Archmage Ahrabose, but, in defeat, slew his enemy by bringing the Tower of Yintros down upon them both with a *great shout*. Rendargallis and many other young apprentices and prestidigitators of Waterdeep searched the wreckage of the Tower that night, seeking items of power and written spells. The blasted corpse of Ulthorn was found, with his shattered staff and emerald sigil ring, but the Spellbook was gone. In the ashes that had been Ulthorn, some being had scratched in Common: "Daimos reclaims his own."

The whereabouts of the tome thereafter are uncertain, but confused tales have come to the northern Realms from Ankhapur far to the south, and from Twostars, a trails-meet and well-stop on the Golden Way trade road east of the Inner Sea, of two separate skirmishes in which magic-users have employed *great shouts*. One of these two is known to a sage, Thantos of Selgaunt, who states that she is too young to have known the spell before, or immediately after, the death of Ulthorn in Waterdeep and, thus, must have learned it since. Perhaps she gleaned it from another source, but Thantos, the aged Rendargallis, and Elminster all agree that the "Spellbook of Daimos" is the only known source. Who or what "Daimos" is and the present location, aims, and powers (or even existence) of such a being are presently unknown.

The last two of the "Spellbook's" thirty-six pages are blank, but all others bear magic-user spells, as follows (in order of appearance): *identify*, *magic missile*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *web*, *fireball*, *monster summoning I*, *slow*, *suggestion*, *confusion*, *fear*, *fire trap*, *polymorph self*, *animate dead*, *cloudkill*, *feeblemind*, *flame shroud* (unique spell), *watch ware* (unique spell), *anti-magic shell*, *disintegrate*, *geas*, *globe of invulnerability*, *reincarnation*, *repulsion*, *Bigby's Grasping Hand*, *duo-dimension*, *power word stun*, *vanish*, *great shout* (unique spell), *incendiary cloud*, *mind blank*, *astral spell*, *gate*, and *imprisonment*. All commonly known spells are in the "standard"

form (as noted above), save for monster *summoning* I, which Daimos (or another being) developed so that the caster can, by effort of will, determine the type of monsters summoned (75% chance of success at this). Casting time is increased to a full round (as the creatures desired must be mentally pictured and this image concentrated on), and the number of creatures that appear is still 2-8, random.

The three unique spells in the Spellbook of Daimos are as follows:

Flame shroud (Alteration)

Level: 5

Range: 1"

Casting Time: 5 segments

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: Aura about one creature

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, a magic-user causes an aura of crackling flame to come into being about an unwilling target. Unless adequately protected against fire, the target takes fiery damage, all flammable objects upon his or her person (e.g., clothing or papers such as scrolls or spell books) must save vs. magical fire or be destroyed, and other creatures within 1" of the target may also suffer damage. The *flame shroud* envelops the victim and rages, throwing off small goutts of flame up to 1" distant onto every creature within range. Each goutt does 1-4 hp of damage to any creature it strikes, and may possibly endanger other flammable objects carried by such creatures. The target creature is allowed a saving throw each round against the *flame shroud*. The first save is vs. spells at -4; if successful, the *shroud* will not form, the target is unharmed, and the spell is lost. The second save (on the second round) is at -3, and so on, the save for the 5th round being at par, that for the 6th at +1, and continuing until a successful saving throw is made, whereupon the *shroud* instantly vanishes, and the spell is done. For each round enveloped by a *flame shroud*, the target suffers 2-12 hit points of fire damage. If flammable oil is carried by the creature, its damage is added to this if the container of oil fails its own saving throw. The material components for this spell are a pinch of saltpeter (powdered or in a natural substance such as dung), a small piece of phosphorus, and a tiny scrap of lace, cloth, or thick spiderweb.

Watchware (Evocation)

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 1 round

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: One item

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: When a *watchware* is cast upon an item, the caster is warned thereafter at the moment that the item moves or is moved from the place or position it was in at the time of spell cast-

ing, or whenever the item is touched by any living creature. A *watchware* may be cast on any non-living item of any size, but is usually cast upon a spell book, lock, door, wand, staff, or item of treasure. On the first occasion after completion of casting a *watchware* that the item is disturbed, the caster — even if asleep, *charmed*, or unconscious, and even if years have passed or the caster is a great distance or even several planes distant — will receive mental images of the item and its surroundings. If living creatures are within 1" of the item or have touched it, the caster will receive clear images of them and of their doings for 1 round per level of the caster when he or she cast the *watchware* after they disturb the item. This is not an *ESP* or a *wizard eye* spell; the caster hears nothing, knows nothing of what such creature say or think, and cannot see their surroundings or gain any hint of direction of travel after they leave the immediate vicinity of the disturbed item. The caster may touch or move an item upon which he or she has cast a *watchware* without setting off the spell. Note that earth tremors and the like will set off the spell, even if no creature or deliberate intent to take or move the item is involved. Items upon which a *watchware* has been cast radiate a faint dweomer; if a *dispel magic* is cast upon an item under *watchware*, the *watchware* will immediately be activated, not dispelled. Note that a *watchware* works once only and is not a permanent or continual protection. Death of the spell caster ends the magic, even if the *watchware* was not activated or the spell caster is subsequently raised from the dead. The material components of this spell are a strand of spiderweb, a tiny brass or silver bell, and an eyeglass or speculum of glass or crystal.

Great shout (Evocation)

Level: 8

Range: Self

Casting Time: 1 segment

Duration: Instantaneous

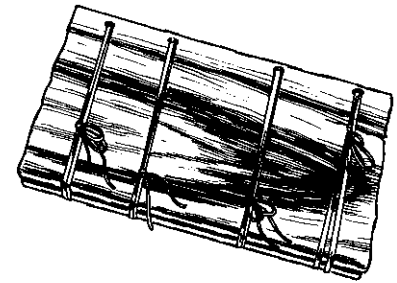
Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: 2" by 9" cone

Components: V, M

Explanation/Description: The unleashing of a *great shout* instantly drains the caster of 2-8 (2d4) hit points, which can be regained by rest and curative magic; a system shock survival roll must also be made. The caster releases a wave of sound of stunning force akin to a *horn of blasting*: 18 structural points of damage dealt in a 1' -wide, 8'-long path — sufficient to smash a drawbridge, split a boulder, or flatten a normal cottage. All creatures in the cone of sound must save vs. magic; those saving are *stunned* into inactivity for 1 round and *deafened* for 2 rounds. Those failing the save are *deafened* for 4 rounds, *stunned* for 2, and suffer 1-10 hit points of physical damage. All magical and non-magical items in the "narrow path" described above must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. Creatures in the "narrow path" take double (2-20) damage if they fail to save, and 1-10

(plus 2 rounds of stunning and 4 of deafness) if they successfully save. The material component for this spell is some minor item upon which a dweomer has been cast (or failing that, a scroll or magical item), which is held by the caster and consumed by the spell in the casting. Artifacts cannot be used to power a *great shout*.



Book of Num "the Mad"

Appearance

This tome is a slim volume of rough slabs of ironwood, tied together by leathern thongs in a "sandwich" around twenty-four loose, unbound sheets of fine parchment.

History and description

Num "the Mad" (no relation to "Lum the Mad") was crippled from birth and grew up, ridiculed and teased all the while, in the alleys of Selgaunt port. His only place of refuge was the splendid Hunting Garden of the Hulorn of Selgaunt, a vast, high-walled preserve within the city forbidden to all save the Hulorn's guests (Num found an old sewer that led into its grounds). Able only to crawl, Num was seen one day and easily chased down by one of the Hulorn's huntsmen, who rode over him and unrested a lance to slay the intruder — and was himself slain by the fall of a dead tree. Num hastily left the Garden and made for the inland forests.

Although hitherto cynical and god-derisive, he saw the tree's fall not as chance but as the direct work of Silvanus, and he began to worship the Father with devotion. Seeking out a druid of the Circle nigh Shadowdale, he learned the basics of woodlore and worship, and soon became a hermit, holding himself apart from men and working tirelessly to improve the forest. At length he was healed of his disabilities by grateful sylvan elves, and he lived long in solitude and serenity, developing special prayers to Silvanus — for which, and for his works, he was rewarded with special powers from the Father. Upon his death, the elves kept his grove and cave-home from fortune hunters and searching druids alike, and it was many years before raiding orcs under Gorth gained Num's prayer book, stealing it away to unknown hands. Num was not mad, but had strange manners of speech and thought, and was popularly believed among men to be so, hence his nickname. His prayers are finely written in a flowing hand, and are well thought of by elves and druids alike.

It is from the writings of the elf Ruven Mithalvarin that we have a record of the Book's contents. Each page contains a single prayer. The first is a general giving of thanks (a non-magical ritual) to Silvanus. The other twenty-three are specific instructions and litanies on how to pray to the Father for specific spells, as follows: **faerie fire**, **invisibility to animals**, **pass without trace**, **purify water**, **fire trap**, **obscurement**, **hold animal**, **snare**, **tree**, **water breathing**, **briartangle** (unique prayer, described below), **call woodland beings**, **plant door**, **thorn spray** (unique prayer), **commune with nature**, **control winds**, **pass plant**, **turn wood**, **weather summoning**, **animate rock**, **confusion**, **death chariot** (unique prayer), and **transmute metal to wood**.

The special prayers devised by Num (or inspired in him by Silvanus) are as follows:

Briartangle (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: 1 "/level (distance from caster to chosen spell focus)

Casting Time: 6 segments

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: 1/2

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: A *briar-tangle* spell causes living shrubbery or undergrowth of any type to be instantly changed to densely tangled briars of the thorniest sort, growing to 6' in height and increasing in horizontal volume to a 1" circular radius, plus 1" additional radius for every 2 levels of experience of the caster (thus, a 2nd-level druid would cause a *briar-tangle* of 2" radius). The briars can be readily forced through, but will snag and halt missiles, thrown objects, or flying creatures within their confines; all creatures trapped within a *briartangle* when it forms, or those that enter it thereafter, will suffer 3-6 points of piercing and scratching damage per round, or portion thereof, that they remain in contact with the spell. Beings clad in banded, scale, or plate mail have all damage thus done lessened to 1-3 points per round. This also applies to creatures made of rock or with skin of comparable hardness, but creatures with lesser armor, such as chain, take full damage, with or without a shield. In all cases, a successful save vs. spells equals half damage. Spell casting requiring a somatic component is impossible within a *briar-tangle*, and cloth raiment and items must save vs. acid once per round (or portion thereof) that they are within the *briartangle's* confines or be rent and torn. A *briar-tangle* will vanish instantly if the caster so wills, but otherwise exists for 1 round per experience level of the caster, the plants afterwards reverting to their former state.

The material components of the spell are living plants of any type (which are transformed into the *briartangle*), mistletoe, a thorn from any plant, and a bud, petal, or leaf from a briar (wild rose). Fire will destroy a *briar-tangle* in a round, but creatures within it take 2-12 hit points of fiery dam-

age (no saving throw). The area where a *briartangle* was cast radiates a faint dweomer for 2-6 turns after the spell has expired, and can be used to confuse creatures following a *pass without trace* trail by detecting a dweomer.

Thorn spray (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: 1"

Casting Time: 3 segments

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, a druid can cause barbs, spikes, thorns, or spines, either naturally growing or magically created (i.e., by use of a *spike growth*, *wall of thorns*, or *briartangle* spell), to spring with force from his or her hand, or from bushes or resting places (which must be within 1" of the druid), and serve as missiles. The thorns will do 1 hit point of damage each, and can fly up to 12" away, within the round of casting, striking as many targets as the druid wishes and the spell allows for (see below). The druid may direct the thorns in any combination at any living or non-living (i.e. a scroll, lantern, or wineskin) target(s) that he or she can see. The thorns strike only if a successful "to hit" roll is made (at +4) for each, as though they were directly wielded by the druid (i.e., no range penalties apply).

Sleep-venomed wooden darts are sometimes carried by druids who use this spell often. The missiles of a *thorn spray* twist and turn in flight to follow moving targets and avoid obstructions, and are fast enough to catch most birds on the wing (moving approximately 120 yards/segment). A maximum of 4 thorns per experience level of the druid can be animated by means of this spell. This spell will work underwater, but the thorns roll to hit at normal "to hit" odds, and the range is lessened to 9".

Death chariot (Evocation, Conjuraction/Summoning)

Level: 7

Range: 1"

Casting Time: 1 turn

Duration: Special

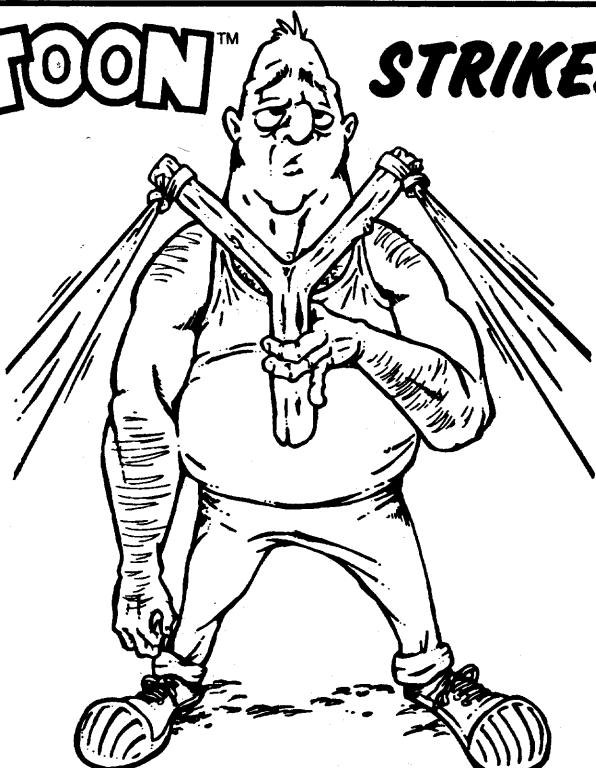
Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, a clap of thunder sounds and a billowing cloud of smoke erupts from the caster. Within this cloud appears a flaming chariot pulled by two fiery horses. This vehicle moves 24" on the ground, 48" flying, and can carry up to 9 man-sized creatures (the caster need not be among them). The chariot will feel uncomfortably hot to approach, and merely touching one of the horses will do 3-24 points of fiery damage, but boarding or touching the chariot will do no damage. Anyone in the chariot may

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control the path of the chariot by verbal command, causing the flaming steeds to stop or go, walk, trot, run or fly, turn left or right, rise, or descend. The vehicle and steeds can be harmed by water (one quart will cause 1 hit point of damage) or by magical weapons. The steeds are AC 2, and can be dispelled by inflicting 30 hit points of damage each upon them. The steeds and chariots can be forcibly returned to the Elemental Plane of Fire by use of such spells as *dispel magic*, *holy/unholy word*, etc. Fire or electricity will not harm the chariot or steeds, but cold-, ice-, or water-based magic will do them double damage.

A *death chariot* closely resembles a *Chariot of Sustarre*, save that its enchantments are less stable and more temporary; at the end of 1 turn after casting (or at any time previous to that, if the caster wishes), the *death chariot* will suddenly explode in a gigantic ball of fire and vanish (along with its steeds). All in the *chariot* or within 3" will take 10-40 points of fiery damage (save equals half damage); passengers will suffer a further 2 hp of blast shock (as oxygen is consumed in the blast, and air rushes back in to fill the void), and — if the *chariot* vanishes in midair — falling damage unless magic items or spells afford escape. Readily combustible materials such as cloth, wood, paper, and oil will be consumed in the blast (add flaming oil damage to any *chariot* passenger carrying it upon their person). All other items (including scrolls and spell books) gain a saving throw vs. *fireball*. If items also suffer a fall (i.e., from a midair *death chariot* blast), they must also save against its effects. The bringing of an *alchemy jug* or a *decanter of endless water* into or onto the *chariot* will cause it to immediately explode. The material components of the spell are a small piece of wood, bark, or handful of shavings, 2 holly berries, and a fire source at least equal to a torch. Note that a druid could well deceive others into thinking the *death chariot* is a *Chariot of Sustarre* by touching them before they enter the chariot and accompanying them. The druid causes the *chariot* to explode by act of will, not verbal command, so he or she could "bail out" before igniting the trap — or, alternatively, ride the *chariot* in safety for a short trip (i.e. across a chasm, down from a cliff, tower, battlement, etc.), and then leave it as a fiery trap, or even send it back at a pursuing enemy before causing it to explode. Attempts to *charm*, *sleep*, or *hold* the fiery steeds will be unsuccessful. The maximum duration of existence of a *death chariot* (if not exploded earlier) is 1 round per level of the caster; if kept until maximum duration, the *chariot* will fade away harmlessly, and not explode.

Briel's Book of Shadows

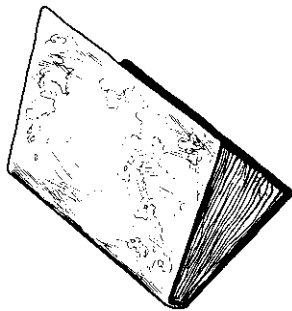
Appearance

This untitled volume is a large, leather-bound folio with twenty-one wrinkled, dog-eared sheets of parchment sewn in place. It

has received heavy (though careful) handling, and is obviously a workbook, full of scribbled notes and thoughts, rather than a formal compendium of spells.

History and description

This untitled, ancient volume has traditionally been known as "Briel's Book of Shadows," as it is thought to be the work of the Archmage Briel when he was but an apprentice under the tutelage of the great Aumvor the Undying (now believed to be a lich whose lair is somewhere in the vast mountain ranges of the North). The sage Ubergast of Amn points out that the informal handwriting found in the "Book" closely resembles that preserved in a letter



in the archives of Baldur's Gate, wherein Briel wrote of his intention to found a school of wizardry there. Certainly no other claimant to authorship has declared himself, nor has been advanced as more than speculation by sages.

The book's inscriptions are rambling, and the pages are much stained with various liquids and powders used as ingredients in spells, spell inks, and in the making of a homonculus. Its useful contents are as

- Complete descriptions and instructions for the cantrips *exterminate*, *tie*, *wilt*, and *smokepuff* (all in "standard" form, as described above).
- The complete spells *affect normal fires*, *scatterspray* (a unique spell), *shield*, and *write*.
- The magical and medicinal uses of alicorns (unicorn horns).
- A recipe, copied from another source, for the making of a homonculus (cf. *Monster Manual*).

Specifics of some of these contents follow:

Scatterspray (Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: Spell focus 1" distant per level of caster

Casting Time: 1 segment

Duration: 1 round

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, the magic-user causes any unconfined or untethered objects of chicken-egg size or less within a 1" radius spherical area of effect to spray violently outward in all directions, as though thrown by an explosion. The missiles are not created by the spell; the magic-user must employ objects at hand or on his own person. Typically coins,

marbles, gems, dice, sling bullets, and the like are employed. The *scatterspray* plucks all such objects (except those actually within the robes, pockets, pouches, and pack of the caster) within the 1" radius area of effect up and hurls them 1" outward in all directions. Upon reaching the limits of this thrust, the objects rebound back inwards and ricochet about within the 2" radius total area for the entire round following the round of casting. All man-sized creatures within this greater (2") area take 1-4 points of shrapnel damage. (save equals half damage, round upwards); small-sized creatures take 1-6 points (successful saves halving damage); and large-sized creatures are unharmed. The material components for the *scatterspray* are the missiles (at least six egg-sized or nine coin-sized objects are required, but the spell will affect up to four dozen of either), and a flint and steel or tinder-box (not consumed in spell casting), with which a spark must be struck. The caster can choose the spell focus (center of the 1" radius area of effect, and 2" radius blast area) by act of will, determining direction and distance (the intended focal area need not be seen). It can be distant from the caster by 1" per experience level of the caster. The spell caster is never harmed by the missiles of his or her own *scatterspray*. Other creatures protected by *forcecubes* and the like will be unaffected; *shield* spells and similar one-sided defenses will reduce damage suffered by 1 hit point. If a *scatterspray* is cast with insufficient missiles (see above) present, nothing will occur, and the magic will be lost. Sprites, insects of all types, and other flying creatures with delicate wings must save vs. spell when caught in a *scatterspray*, or be unable to fly (wings pierced and bruised, or torn, and numb) for 14 turns; large-sized creatures and those with powerful wings (such as perytons and pseudo-dragons) of sturdy construction are immune to this effect.

The uses of alicorns

Alicorns, or the horns of unicorns, are rare and precious things, seldom gained by a user of magic, so it behooves one not to waste or misuse any such gained. Often the horns of other creatures will be sold or offered as alicorns; the powers and properties below are unique to alicorns, and testing will avoid successful deception.

When a unicorn lives, its intact horn has strong magical powers, notably the ability to call upon Silverymoon (the "divine unicorn," mentioned in *DRAGON* issue #54 in the Forgotten Realms pantheon, under "Cults of the Beast") for one clerical spell of any sort per day, something seldom done (some say Silvanus grants such magics). Unicorns cannot be coerced into such use of their horns — nor do the horns retain this power if removed from the host, or if the unicorn is slain.

Other powers do continue after the separation from the living beast, and these should be carefully noted; most importantly, they are sovereign remedies against poison.

Upon direct contact with any poison — liquid, solid, or vapor — a unicorn's horn turns from its usual ivory hue to purple, the intensity of the color (mauve through black) deepening according to the efficacy of the poison. (This effect fades in 1-4 rounds after the cessation of contact.) Some, very rare, alicorns are naturally of a hue other than ivory, but they are never purple, and turn to such hues only when poison is present. Powdered unicorn horn, taken internally (washed down with water or wine) is an antidote to all ingested poisons, neutralizing such immediately, to prevent any further damage. Rubbing an envenomed blade, spearhead or arrow-tip with powdered or whole alicorn will remove and negate the poison (so effectively that the process of removal itself is not dangerous). A unicorn horn carried next to the skin of any creature confers upon that creature a +7 bonus in all saving throws of any sort.

Druids have found that a *faerie fire* spell cast upon a whole alicorn or piece of alicorn will last for 44 rounds. The efficacy of a mending spell is increased by touching a part of the item to be mended with an alicorn during casting; magical items can be made whole — although their *dweomer* is not restored — and shattered items with many fractures (such as broken earthenware pots or crystal flasks) can be completely restored. If the cantrip *bluelight* is cast with an alicorn in hand, the glow centers upon the horn, not the caster's palm, and the horn can be released by the caster and the caster and horn separated by any distance without the light failing — until the caster ceases to concentrate on it.

Other powers of alicorns are rumored, but no more as yet have been verified. Powdered alicorn is known to be a possible ingredient (there are herbal alternatives) in the making of a *sweet water* potion.

Homonculous creation

Being A Recipe, Most Complete And Correct, Prepared By The Willing And Allied Hands Of The Grand Alchemist Of Neverwinter, Askrim "the Bold," And The Wizard Dauntus, Seneschal of Silvery-moon: The Making Of A Homonculous.

Firstly, an acidic base of water into which is crushed a thousand thousand ants, and out of which is strained the insect remains, is prepared in a black iron cauldron.

Secondly, the following herbs must be crushed and powdered together in a separate vessel: an acorn, and a whole plant or large leaf each of balmony, birthwort, fennel, and ginseng.

Thirdly, a brass brazier must be lit, stoked with charcoal, and over the flames must be cast a handful of rose petals, incense, and a pinch of fine sand.

The cauldron of acid must now be placed on the brazier and heated. Straightaway, ere it comes to the boil, the powdered herbs must be stirred into it (mind that a dipper or ladle of wood and not metal is used), and the following ingredients must also be introduced into it, in the order given: the whole

skin of any reptile (size is unimportant, so long as the skin is whole), a human eye, the brain of a mind flayer, the wings of a bat, and the mouthparts or whole head of a vampiric bat. These may be agitated and stirred as necessary — they must be wholly dissolved ere the mixture comes to a boil.

As the mixture begins to bubble in earnest, the magic-user shall let fresh blood from his own body into a vessel by means of an incision, and one pint exactly must be added to the pot.

The alchemist then must tend the mixture constantly, allowing the brazier to burn out and the mixture slowly cool. When the side of the cauldron is no warmer than the room, the mixture may be covered (tightly, with stretched and tarred hide sealed with wax, to keep the air out) and left undisturbed for 1-4 weeks. When it is adjudged ready (by the smell of the seal, which should be sharply spicy) by the alchemist, the mixture shall be uncovered and put once more over a brazier with charcoal and incense. As it heats, the magic-user must

cast a *mending* spell upon the fluid, then a *mirror image*, and then a *wizard eye*. He must then remain within the presence of the cauldron, or at least within the future radius of control of the creature (48"), as the mixture is heated to a boil. The alchemist shall then stoke the fires hotter, and when much of the fluid is boiled away, the completed homonculous will be revealed in the cauldron. When it has cooled (the vapors from the cauldron passing away), the magic-user must touch it. It will then be animate, and will survive (barring physical attack or misfortune) until the death of the magic-user, whereupon it will dissolve into boiling vapor and pass into nothingness. If it should die first and the magic-user survive its death, guard and hide its corpse well, for whatever is done to the carcass shall happen also to the spell caster — do not burn the remains unless you have magics to protect against fire. Remember too, that it can see in the darkness where you cannot, and can guard while you sleep, waking you at the approach of any creature.

8

Arcana update

(From page 2)

or have your character use a new weapon or cast a new spell.

You're going to like it because even if you have all the old issues of the magazine and even if you enjoy searching through them, you'll find a lot of stuff in *Unearthed Arcana* that has never been published before. And everything that has already appeared in print is being reworked and revised; none of the "reprints" are identical to how they appeared as articles, and some of them have been added to and altered extensively. (At last, we're going to be able to show everyone the difference between "official" and "final.")

The book will be the same size and length as the *Players Handbook* — 128 pages. If all goes well, it'll be released in June. The text is being put together by four people, at least three of whom know their stuff pretty well. (If you can't figure out who the fourth one is, then you haven't read the first section of this month's letters column yet.) Gary Gyga and his right-hand man, Frank Mentzer, are looking over every sentence of the new rules to be sure they're as comprehensive and complete as we can make them. Design consultant Jeff Grubb has worn out several fine-toothed combs grooming the text, adding a line here and a few paragraphs there. The final editing is being done by this Gentle Grammarian, who will take personal responsibility for any undotted i's or uncrossed t's.

So what's in it? Well, here's a brief rundown of some of the subjects the new rules will cover. Among the new or greatly changed sections are: another method of character generation; cleric spells; more miscellaneous magic items; more magic armor and weapons; the barbarian character class (wait 'til you see him now); and an expansion of the rules for weapon specialization.

In addition to that, you'll get all the other game-related material that has been published in this magazine under Gary Gyga's name for the last three years or so — the cavalier and thief-acrobat character classes; cantrips; new spells for magic-users, druids, and illusionists; revised rules for rangers, druids, and demi-humans; comeliness, a new character ability; and lots of new weapon types, providing monster-smashers with more different ways to do what they do best.

All of this, and more, will be protected from the elements by a cover that would be suitable for framing if it wasn't already serving a good purpose. Jeff Easley, whose work adorns the newest editions of the other AD&D game rule books, really outdid himself this time.

I'm proud to play a part in the project. I think all of us on this end are going to be pleased with the result and, casting modesty aside for just one more moment, I think . . . You're going to like *Unearthed Arcana*.





The only good captive . . .

. . . is one that lives to fight another day

by Lew Pulsipher

Not long ago a friend described a tragic AD&D® game adventure to me. In his campaign a party of characters, afoot in the wilderness, approached a small castle in hostile territory. Two of its number, invisible or hiding in shadows, entered the castle to scout the opposition. Unfortunately, their curiosity — or stupidity — got the better of them: they unwisely and unnecessarily stirred up the gnolls, trolls, and bugbears in residence, then they fled back to the rest of the party with the enemy in pursuit. Although the adventurers fled, only two of them escaped capture. A month of game time passed before those two were able to lead another party back to the spot.

"What could I do?" my friend, who was the referee, said. "There's no way the gnolls and trolls would hold prisoners for that long, so they ate them, and all of them were dead when the rescue party arrived."

I was astonished, since there are many ways — excuses, one might say — for a referee to keep captured adventurers alive if he so desires. In this case, most of the party suffered for the foolishness of two. This is a good example of a situation in which the referee ought to do something to keep the unfortunates alive.

This article is especially for referees who have been unable to think of enough ways to save player characters who, through no fault of their own (no major fault, anyway), are prisoners of the enemy or who are trapped with little hope of immediate improvement of the situation.

The methods of saving prisoners from an undeserved fate are to have the monsters or NPCs in charge of the situation 1) hold the

characters for ransom, 2) use the characters as slaves, 3) sell the unfortunates to slavers, 4) save the characters to use — or perhaps, sacrifice — at an appropriate future time, 5) release the prisoners after somehow "teaching them a lesson," 6) keep prisoners alive due to an emotional or irrational reason, or 7) perhaps the PCs themselves will solve the problem by devising a means of escape or subterfuge leading to escape. All of these will be considered in turn, with some examples from actual game campaigns.

1. Ransom

Monsters and villains, the non-player opposition, are usually avaricious. Player characters are often wealthy, though they don't carry all their wealth with them if they're smart. And player characters often have wealthy friends. Therefore, rather than simply kill them, wouldn't some intelligent monsters choose to "cash in" their prisoners for a large sum of money? Those monsters that aren't interested in money may want magic items or some other compensation. Frequently, prisoners can offer either possessions that they left behind or possessions belonging to their friends (who would be paid back, of course).

Sometimes money or items may not be enough; in such cases, captives can be forced to offer limited or specific service as ransom. This works best when there are several captives, because each captive is a guarantee against betrayal by the others — "If any of you break your word, you'll all die!" for example. Two captives might be sent to search for something — an item, a person, some information — desired by the

captor(s), while a third captive is kept behind as a hostage.

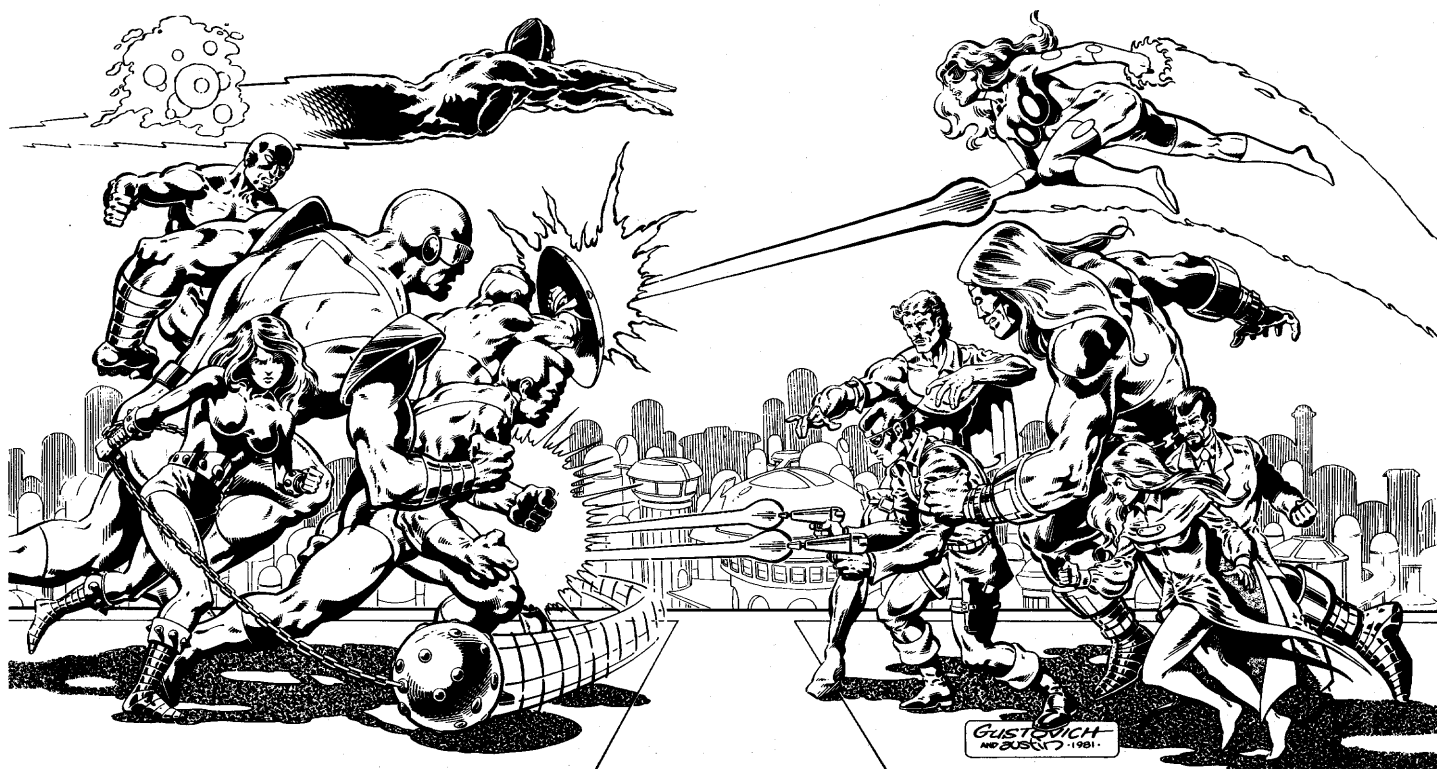
In the simplest case, the captors may merely want a docile servant for a time. They'll offer freedom a year from now, say, in return for cooperation from the captive during that period.

In some campaigns, a sort of "kidnapping capitalism" could exist. Adventurers would arrange for their ransom *before* they embark on an expedition, and hostile creatures would become accustomed to collecting compensation rather than wasting a captive in some other manner.

Here's an example of straight ransom. A party of eight mid-level adventurers encounter four powerful spell casters in the wilderness, and through poor tactics and bad luck, they lose the melee. But no one is killed, because the PCs have the good sense to surrender before it's too late. The villains turn out to be neutral rather than evil, though they started the fight. They offer to ransom the PCs for all they carried (which the villains have already taken, of course), plus additional considerations. They negotiate separately with each of the player characters, arrange a meeting and a drop site for payment of the additional ransom, extract a strong oath from the characters, and leave. The players had a bargaining chip on their side: they knew that if they didn't return from their expedition, their friends would assume something bad had happened and would use a powerful (and very rare) *wish* to save the whole party by wishing that they'd never met the bad guys. When the PCs made this fact known to the enemy spell casters, the villains realized that

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they had to strike a bargain that would cost the PCs less than the wish was worth — otherwise, the captives would balk at the villains' ransom demands and wait for the *wish* to be implemented by their friends, and the ransomers would come away from the experience with nothing for their trouble. Once a deal was struck, the referee did not play out the payment procedure in detail, because he was sure that both sides would keep the bargain with the *wish* hanging over all.

But this is an exceptional instance; few ransom situations involve a *wish*. In that case, how can the PCs and the villains trust each other? Mutual self-interest can go a long way, but as the history of international diplomacy shows, there are serious limits to the force of mutual self-interest.

The captors may be more inclined to accept the word of lawful characters rather than those of a non-lawful alignment, assuming some form of coercion is not possible. But magic items or spells — *geas* or *quest*, for example — may be available to help ensure that captives carry out their part of the bargain. Perhaps the bad guys will retain one or two prisoners and will let the rest go to gather the ransom. Then, both sides have a bargaining chip for the payment meeting. However, a lot can go wrong.

For example, during a horrendous outdoor adventure, a party is forced to abandon several incapacitated characters as the remainder flee by air from giants and dozens of smaller creatures. As the characters fly away, they shout an offer to ransom their friends in return for a relic they have taken from the enemy; the time and location of the exchange are also set. At the suggested time, several members of the party appear at the designated location; for safety's sake, some are flying, while others remain invisible. They see three bodies, stripped to the bone but still capable of being resurrected. After some uncertainty, the party spots the enemy, hands over the relic, and retrieves the bodies of the ransomed friends. Unfortunately, they learn too late that these aren't their friends' bodies!

Since the whole point of the ransoming procedure, in most cases, is to extricate characters from an undeserved fate, a means of enabling PCs and NPCs to trust each other in rare cases has been devised. This is called the "Great Oath," an oath to one's god(s) that can be broken only at risk of the god's great displeasure. After all, most gods must prefer their worshipers to be honest with them, especially in the case of an oath that requires a half-hour ritual to swear. The ritual ends with a spark-shower display that indicates the acknowledgement of the appropriate god's minions. While the gods themselves don't have time to listen to oaths, they can learn about oath-breaking from their minions.

Captives and captors then resort to the Great Oath to "seal a deal." Each group takes its own oath, with the other group

witnessing the final part of the ceremony. But this is used only when there seems to be no other way to come to an agreement. No one takes a Great Oath lightly, and it is rarely given.

It may be possible to fake a Great Oath, but this is a difficult task. There may be occasions when there's no time to take a Great Oath, but frequently the questions of prisoners and ransom will arise from a standoff (some party members are cornered but free and able to cause harm, while others are already captured) or from a *fait accompli*, and there'll be time for negotiations and oaths.

A more difficult problem of the Great Oath is chaos. Do chaotic gods care whether their worshipers break oaths? Perhaps not, but some nominally chaotic characters may respect oaths out of a personal sense of honor, regardless of the attitude of their gods. At the least, the Great Oath would be less satisfactory when chaotic gods are involved. Lawful evil characters are, in this case, much more trustworthy. The more chaotic the personalities involved, the more one must rely on mutual self-interest — a deal beneficial to both sides — and less on trust.

2. Slavery

In certain situations, perhaps the captors will decide to enslave the adventurers, but such a decision depends on the circumstances. A few orcs are less likely than a few giants to try to enslave human adventurers. A 1st-level fighter won't be much trouble as a slave compared to, say, a 10th-level fighter. In one respect, a cleric wouldn't make a good slave, since he gains new spells through prayer and therefore cannot easily be rendered harmless. On the other hand, clerics can be useful slaves because they can be forced to heal and otherwise help the captors. A spell caster who relies on books to learn more spells is the easiest of all character classes to turn into a slave. Strip the spell caster of his books, keep him under guard and threaten him with punishment or death if he attempts to use any spells he may have memorized, and what can he do? A *charm* spell or other magic may make spell-casting prisoners tractable for a time, but most such spells quit working sooner or later. However, some captors may develop, or purchase from slavers, a form of curse that renders a character mute for an indefinite period of time. The ultimate form of enslavement is magic that permanently changes the alignment of the captive so that he joins his former captors.

Aside from their adventuring skills, adventurers may be useful to their captors by virtue of their education. A magic-user could serve as a scribe, an accountant, or a translator, for example.

Be aware that an adventurer-turned-slave is not the safest person to have in one's possession. The slavers had better be powerful, numerous, or just plain confident. Captors rarely enslave their prisoners for their own use, however. More frequently,

when slavery is an option, captors sell their prisoners to slavers.

By the way, a slave cannot be forced to take the Great Oath to serve his master loyally. Oaths sworn under compulsion simply don't work — the gods will ignore them, if they even hear them to begin with. A *voluntary* oath is a different possibility. Who, however, would voluntarily enslave himself indefinitely? The Great Oath is more likely to be a part of a bargain for limited service.

3. Slavers

Most fantasy worlds include their share of professional slavers — middlemen who obtain slaves and sell them to labor-intensive or specialized concerns such as mines, large-scale agriculture, or gladiatorial arenas. In general, most adventurers will be unsatisfactory slaves for mines and other mass-manpower industries because adventurers are likely to cause dissension in these situations. While a slaver might sell adventurers without revealing their origins, this could get the slaver into trouble with his regular customers.

For some specialized functions, adventurers would be in demand. Those buying slaves to row the galleys may want strong, tough-minded, healthy specimens — a description fitting most adventurers. Those buying for gladiatorial schools and private armies that compete in the arena will definitely want skilled adventurers. In either case, spell-casters might not be wanted, since they are potentially so dangerous.

Slavers might be drawn into the ransom situation. After all, since they didn't capture the adventurers, they have little to fear in the way of retribution unless the adventurer foolishly threatens them. Ransom is a business deal only, little more than selling a slave to a friend who will free him or selling the slave to himself. The slaver may even refer to this as a reward rather than a ransom. Smart players will offer to ransom their characters rather than take a chance with a new owner.

Here's an example of the slave trade at work. A party of low-level characters is heading for the way out of a dungeon when the adventurers hear noises behind the group for several minutes. But they fail to check out the noises, and half of the party uses an elevator to go to the surface while the other half waits below. The latter half is attacked and overcome by the humans who had trailed them; two die and four are captured. The villains are a small group, made even smaller by the fight they've just been through. They have no time to waste because the rest of the adventuring party is on the surface and might return soon to investigate.

This was how the referee handled the situation: The bad guys carried off one PC per surviving villain, which came to a total of three. A fourth prisoner was eliminated, since four captives were too much for the captors to handle. Having neither a stronghold of their own nearby in which to hold

the prisoners nor the confidence that they could keep so many prisoners together during an extended journey, the villains took the prisoners to a nearby slaver and sold them cheaply. The slaver, in turn, sold the characters to another slaver, and the PCs finally found themselves in a distant city where they became arena gladiators. Here they had their chances in battle; one of them survived, was freed, and became a leader of her own gang, but she never saw any of her former associates. Although only one of the four captives finally escaped death, the outcome was much more interesting than the all-too-common result that the villains simply killed the rest of the defeated party.

4. Ulterior motives

The captors may very well intend to eliminate the captured PCs, but they may want to wait for the right occasion. Sometimes that occasion hinges on an irrational element, but the captors may have a perfectly good reason for the delay. If, for example, the captors are moon worshipers, they might want to wait for a full moon before sacrificing their victims. Perhaps the captors worship the goddess of the harvest and, when the time for harvest occurs, must perform a certain ritual that would require the use of the captives. If the captors intend to sell the PCs into slavery, but the slavers only visit three times a year, then the characters would have to be imprisoned until the

slavers arrive. Perhaps some prophecy or astrological research has indicated that the captives should be retained unharmed until a specific astronomical phenomenon occurs. Whatever the case may be, a reprieve for the captives is certain, providing them with an opportunity to devise some plan or ruse to escape the (not necessarily) inevitable outcome.

5. Teaching a lesson

In certain instances, the captors may not be interested in either ransom or service. Similarly, they might not desire to kill the prisoners, but would rather teach the captives — and consequently, other adventurers — a valuable lesson in leaving others alone. This attitude would be more prevalent in powerful, confident, and intelligent creatures than it would be in weak, doubting, and stupid ones.

The focus of such a lesson would be to teach the prisoners that they should not bother the captors in the future. After, and as part of, the lesson, the captives are released. The captors can then feel confident not only that the captives won't return but also that they will tell the story of what happened to them. This, in turn, will dissuade others from disturbing the captors.

The lesson may take a number of forms. In the most direct case, the captors simply torture the captives before releasing them. More subtly, the captors release their prisoners in a way calculated to disgrace or

shame them. For example, the captors might publicize the date of release a week before the occurrence. On the appointed date, the captives are turned loose, naked, among a mob that gathers to ridicule those who have fallen from their station.

Rather than give the adventurer physical or psychological reminders of his captivity, the captor could mark him magically — a curse, for instance. If the appropriate spell is available, the captor could enchant the captive in a specific way to ensure that he does not return. For example, a spell might cause the former captive to become ill whenever he thinks about returning to the sight of his captivity.

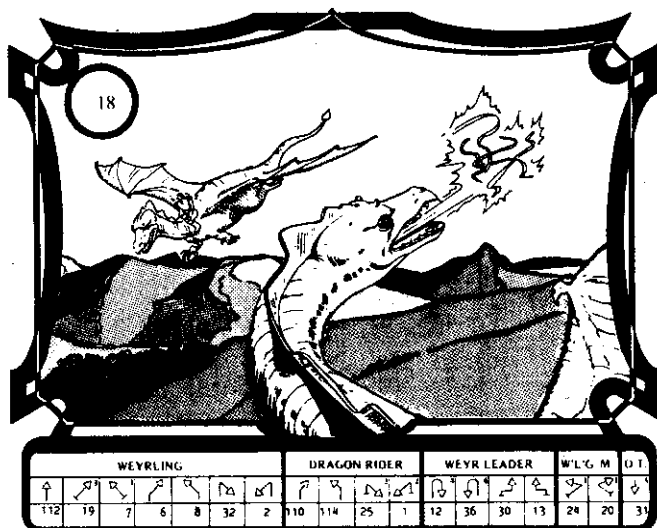
Finally, the captors may force their prisoners to undergo an ordeal as part of the lesson. Adventurers, for example, might be released on an island, in a remote land, or in another dimension. The arduous trip home, assuming the adventurers survive the ordeal, will act as a strong reminder of what could happen again if they don't stay away from their former captors.

The danger of teaching a lesson, from a captor's point of view, is that such treatment could engender desire for revenge in the adventurer in lieu of the desire to leave the captor alone. Consequently, the captor must do all he can to impress the captive with his power and sense of invulnerability.

6. Emotional or irrational actions

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should fantasy characters or monsters be any different? Sometimes the bad guys will keep captives alive for odd reasons. Some of these reasons will be based on emotions, some on sheer stupidity. Whatever these irrational actions entail, they might enable the captives to manipulate the captors in such a fashion that makes escape more likely.

For example, a captor might become infatuated with a prisoner. This, of course, is most believable when the two are of the same race but opposite genders. In such cases, the PC ought to use this infatuation as a lever to preserve the lives of other party members, if possible.

The captors may decide to place the prisoners on trial due to some social or religious infringement. The trial, however, could take weeks or months to resolve, a very common occurrence in legal affairs.

Perhaps the captor's witch doctor claims that the time for executing prisoners is not right due to some religious law or an omen. Or, maybe the captor's executioner is away for a period of time, and the execution of prisoners will have to wait until he returns. Though these ideas may seem a bit odd, they are good reasons — in the proper context — to keep captives alive.

Another possibility is that the captor is arranging some sort of test for the prisoners — for example, a combat with a champion, escape from a seemingly inescapable trap, or running the gauntlet. If the prisoners

successfully meet the challenge, they are released. Though this may not seem entirely rational, there are cultures where admiration for those who can pass a certain test carries more weight than the offense committed against that culture.

Finally, the captor may wish to execute the captives in an inefficient manner. For example, prisoners may be sent into an arena where a fearsome monster tries to devour them. Some may meet their demise. Others, however, might manage to defeat the monster, or evade it, and might find a means of escape. In most cases, the referee will have to dream up a reason for the inefficiency of the death trap; for example, the death of the monster is due to old age.

Consider this mild example of irrational behavior by captors when dealing with their prisoner. During a vicious dungeon melee, a scouting monk finds himself separated from the main party by some wandering monsters that are relatives of the eye tyrant (the beholder). One of the monsters *charms* the monk as he attempts to rejoin the party, and takes the monk along when the party forces these monsters to flee. Since the party meets another group of monsters with which it must contend, there is no time to rescue the monk. The monsters, having lower than average intelligence, aren't quite sure what they should do with the monk. Since they aren't hungry, they decide to send him on a mission of collecting treasure. While this isn't the smartest thing to do with a captive,

such an order does adequately reflect the lack of intelligence and irrational behavior inherent in many such monsters.

Now the person who role-plays the monk gets inspired. He has his monk roam the corridors, knocking on doors and asking for treasure. After a few scrapes, the monk finds a door to a neutral human's lair. The human and his minions invite the monk into the chamber, capture him without a fight, ask him if he has any friends, send them a note, and ransom him back to the friends who'd never expected to see this monk again.

7. Helping oneself

In all the above situations, the captured PCs must struggle to stay alive. If they remain passive, or if they give up hope, then there is little onus on the referee to try to help them. For example, a mid-level lawful neutral cleric, foolishly roaming the wilderness alone, is captured by orcs. The orcs ask him if he has any friends who might be willing to prepare a ransom for him. Instead of responding affirmatively, or instead of suggesting a reason why the orcs might keep him alive, the cleric simply says, "No." What can the referee do but have the orcs kill the cleric?

Player characters can help themselves not only by giving captors reasons to keep them alive or to release them but also by seeking a plausible means of escape. If the situation is not hopeless, and if the players are inventive, then the referee needs none of the excuses outlined above because he can let the characters engineer their own salvation.

A referee can help players out a bit here, too. For example, perhaps the jailer can be bribed with promises of ransom or other kinds of favors. Perhaps rival factions within the captors' tribe or gang can be pitted against each other by manipulative prisoners. Perhaps a captive can feign an alignment change and pretend to join the captors' side. NPCs could join PCs in their endeavor to escape. Whatever the situation may be, the referee can offer characters opportunities to save themselves; however, the awareness and creativity of the players are often the deciding factors in whether their PCs survive the ordeal or not.

Some of these methods of saving captives are more believable or acceptable than others are, but surely every referee can find a few that satisfy his point of view. Keeping characters alive who undoubtedly don't deserve to die is a worthy objective in itself, especially for any referee interested in fairness. Such an objective is also important for the continued success of a campaign. Players who believe that fate is too often unkind to them tend to blame the referee, even if the other players are at fault, and generally quit the game as a result. Though a referee cannot, in most campaigns, allow himself to coddle incompetent players without ruining the game in the long run, neither can he ignore the long-run objective of the game: having fun.

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Blueprint for a big game

How to accommodate a world's worth of players

by Jim Dutton

President, Entertainment Concepts, Inc.

I've been through it several times myself. You're tired of the course your AD&D® games have been taking lately, or you're about to become the Dungeon Master for a new group of players. Maybe you've just learned the game and you're about to DM for the first time. In any case, you need a campaign. You are embarking on a very challenging aspect of being a Dungeon Master, and your creativity is on the line. You can take a couple of evenings and whip up something with little depth to it, or you can spend a little more preparation time and come up with something really special. "Old timers" like myself know that creating an interesting campaign is one of the essential elements in providing a challenging and entertaining session when it's your turn to be the DM.

My company was faced with this situation when TSR, Inc., decided that we should be the firm to design and administer a play-by-mail version of the AD&D game. (This article is in part a story about how a group of professional game designers went about creating a large-scale campaign, and in part a description of the techniques and processes that anyone should use when designing a campaign of any size.) Not only would we have to come up with a campaign setting in which the game could operate, but we'd have to develop a campaign that could interest, challenge, and entertain literally thousands of players. Luckily, we'd all had a great deal of experience designing large-scale fantasy role-playing campaigns, and we had all played in various well-designed game campaigns. But that experience would not be enough. To keep up with a campaign in which hundreds of player characters were busy depopulating the lands of monsters, using up magic items, and finding lost treasures, we'd have to do some thinking in new areas. We'd also be faced with the problem of incorporating *all* aspects of AD&D campaigning into our game. We'd have to decide what monsters and magic to use, how to keep up with the weather, what politics would be like in different areas, and many other aspects of world design that aren't always decided upon in advance or used in every AD&D campaign.

By the time you think of all the normal things that you would put into the building of a world and a campaign (like maps, cities, NPCs, dungeons, mines, special monsters, etc.) and add them to all of the "optional" areas (like weather, calendars, supply, political interaction, your own crea-

tive ideas, etc.), you know that we were facing quite a task. This brings me to the element of campaign design that I consider most important. The proper application of this word encompasses about 90% of the creative process. That word is *organization*. Organization is what keeps all those loose ends from being forgotten, and it helps find out what the loose ends are in the first place. Organization helps you make decisions about how much work certain things will entail, what to include in your campaign, and what to leave out. Best of all, the general rules of organization apply to any job that you do, whether it be designing an AD&D campaign, cleaning your house, or doing a school project.

Defining your goals

The first rule of organization is to decide what your final product will be. If you were building a boat, you wouldn't start until you had decided what the boat should look like, how large it should be, whether it would be a sailboat or a motor boat, and quite a few other things. The same thing applies to the building of your AD&D game world. Several questions must be answered before you throw yourself full steam into the detail work.

1. **How many players or groups of players do you expect to participate in this world?** The more players, the larger you'll need to make the area and content of your map. A corollary to this is the question of how long you think you'll be using this campaign with the same group of players. If you anticipate using the world for quite a while, then it should be large enough for the characters to have new places to explore for as long as it is in use.

2. **How many and what kinds of political and wilderness areas do you want?** If you want evil empires, benevolent kingdoms, theocracies, nations of demi-humans or humanoids, haunted woods, elven forests, mystic lakes, and so forth, you need to know how many of each you want in advance. Your map should have area enough to include all of these things.

3. **What is the current state of your world and how did it get that way?** Many campaigns operate under the "eternal cycle" system. The world is either mostly good with evil on the rise, mostly evil with good on the rise, or in a state of chaos with evil and good relatively equal in strength, fighting it out to see who will wind up on top. The answer to this question will have some bearing on the answer to question 2, above.

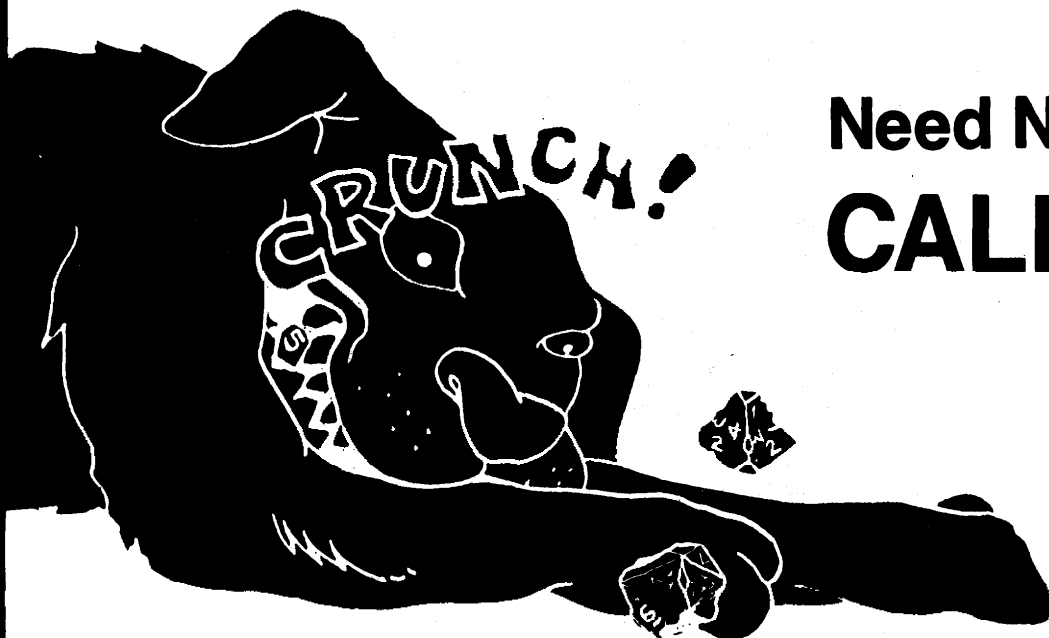
Detailing the campaign

Once you've answered these questions, you'll have a broad idea of the overall nature of your campaign. More importantly, you will have established a foundation for further campaign development. The next step in organizing is to expand upon the decisions you have just made. Here's how we answered the above questions, and how we used those answers to further shape the work done in each of these areas:

1. Needing to provide room for both a large number of players and a long period of game play, we decided to start out with a single very large continent, 5000 by 5000 miles across (25 million square miles in area). This continent was divided into individual areas 5 by 5 miles in size. We kept track of certain terrain types and special features for each of these smaller areas. The continent was also divided into areas 50 by 50 miles across, about which much more information was stored, including notes on populations, types of encounter tables to use, resource values, strategic values, farming values, hunting values, water availability, climate, and so forth. This continent will serve the initial group of players in the campaign. We plan to add three more similarly sized continents as the number of players in our campaign grows.

2. Having decided on the scale of the campaign, we began drawing the map. Our resident artist started by drawing a continental outline on a large graph pad. Then our resident geologist determined the viability of the continental structure, as well as the workability of the land formations (considering what was to be done with the campaign). Next, we added mountain ranges, hill areas, and island chains. Then came river systems, forests, and plains areas. Once these broad terrain areas had been outlined, it was much easier to decide where swamps, volcanoes, and other more specific terrain would go.

This first version of the map was then expanded onto four of the same large-sized sheets of graph paper, which conformed to the scale of our 50 x 50 mile areas. Next came the hard part, transferring the maps to the 5 x 5 mile scale. This was accomplished with 12 sheets of 2' x 3' paper (obtained at an engineering supply store) marked into 100 squares per square inch. Filling in these sheets meant determining detail for one million squares! Luckily, large areas of mountain, sea, lake, desert, and plain could all be done at once, sparing us the task of deciding on terrain for each of those one



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million squares. Obviously, your map need not be broken down to such a detailed scale, but you can use the same procedure to move your first generalized drawing to whatever final scale you want your map to have. DRAGON® issue #56 has an article on drawing realistic maps. If you don't have access to that issue or some similar source, study a few maps of the Earth from an atlas before drawing out your world. As a final note, try not to let the land in your map run off the edges. Use oceans, polar ice fields, or barrier mountains to stop characters from "falling off the edge of the world."

Once the time came to start filling in the terrain on its' most detailed scale, we had to decide on the exact list of terrain features we would use. We came up with a list of about 60 individual types of terrain (see Table 1). This generally included only natural types of terrain, the kinds that you would find here on Earth. However, in a fantasy world, you can include fantasy terrain such as flying cities, floating islands, high magic-potential areas, shivering ground, pockets of radically different climate (such as a frozen pond in the middle of a desert oasis), and land that ripples like waves on the water. Reading fantasy books can give you some inspiration for developing types of magical terrain; several authors, such as Michael Moorcock and Roger Zelazny, have written novels including such imaginative features.

While you're figuring out what terrain to

use in your world and where it will go, take a moment to consider climate and weather. If you are going to use either of these in your campaign, then be aware that terrain placement will have a bearing on weather conditions, and vice versa. Where is the equator? Obviously, your climate will be warmer there and it will grow colder as characters approach the north or south poles. The types of forests on the map will change from hotter to cooler climates, and warmer areas will have more marsh and swampland. Terrain placement will also have effects on both weather patterns and other terrain. The "protected" side of a north-south chain of mountains will tend to have dry plains or deserts, with appropriately low levels of rainfall. These general rules can give you an idea of the broad effects that climate and weather will have on your campaign, should you decide to include them. If you also decide to create a calendar system for your campaign, you can plot rainy seasons, dry seasons, summers and winters, etc.

With the map terrain complete, you can decide on placement of cities and broad political setups. River mouths and forks are natural locations for cities and towns, as are valleys, bays, lakeshores, and other places where water is plentiful. Major river and mountain formations are useful in separating one kingdom from another; these features often served as borders when only primitive travel was available. When the

cities are placed and national boundaries are determined, you can look at each area individually and decide on what kind of society and government exists there, and what relationships are maintained with surrounding countries. This forms one of the most interesting elements of your role-playing campaign. As you make notes about the cities and countries, also make notes about the leaders of each. If you wish, you can go so far as to generate AD&D character statistics for each leader and some of his important underlings, and decide what magic or treasures he might have to offer as rewards (or have stolen from him).

3. Before you made your map and created the world's politics, you answered question 3 above, putting some thought into the overall focus of your world and how it got to be that way. Your answer to this question will have helped while you performed the creative tasks associated with question 2. The finishing touches may be put on the world's history, and at the same time, rationales may be created for the way in which you intend to run your campaign.

This step requires some thought; it can be a little tricky to logically develop your campaign's focus, politics, and history, plus allow for your own DMing style in the game. Perhaps you have decided to be stingy with magic items (having in a previous campaign learned your lesson from characters with golf bags full of swords or staves). You might wish to roll for random encounters more or less often than usual, or have local societies brand magic-users or druids as outcasts. Sooner or later, players will notice these differences in the campaign and will question why those aspects are different. If you did some thinking about this in advance, then you will have worked out rationales for why the campaign functions in that manner and will have given the players some advance warning of what will be different and why. By meeting this problem head-on, you can avoid confusing your players.

As an example of how these things work together, here's a description of how we set up our play-by-mail campaign. First, we decided on a land that was relatively free of evil and strife at the start of the campaign, but which was plagued by a growing evil that the player characters would try to slow or stop as they played the game. We were also looking for ancient heritage in the land, a sense of history and general knowledge about the surrounding world, and an element of exploration. Additionally, we knew that we would be starting characters at both low and high levels, but we didn't want high-level characters to start out with a multitude of magic items, because the search for magic is always an entertaining part of any AD&D campaign. If higher-level characters started with the number of magic items that a character of their level would normally gain through play, then they would have little incentive to quest for powerful tools. We also wanted a current and growing threat that would be very

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Side: Evil Level: 1

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2. Special Weapon: Power-chucks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

Other Weaponry:

Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage
6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.


Weight: 130 lbs.
Strength: 16
Endurance: 13
Agility: 13
Intelligence: 12
Charisma: 15
Dam. Mod.: +1
Accuracy: +1
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dangerous to a large number of characters, something that could be easily recognized as a danger. Since our game will have player interaction, we also needed a way for the game to suggest some competition and strife between the characters. Of course, no campaign is complete without some mystery and risk. To tie all this together, we needed to formulate a history of the world that would make all of these elements fit logically together.

We solved these problems by postulating that colonists had come to this land a long time ago from a dying society, a land being gradually strangled by a growing desert. The colonists found a dangerous land on their arrival, but they tamed the majority of it over the centuries. Still, there were hazardous areas that the colonists did not particularly need to occupy, and these areas were left alone except for occasional attempts at exploration. Once the lands that the colonists occupied were tamed, the need for strong magic for attack and defense decreased. With plenty of land and resources, wars occurred only rarely. After a time, the residents of the land, though capable of and trained for exploration and warfare, grew soft from a lack of either. The great articles of magic employed by their ancestors were packed away and eventually forgotten. But in recent years, some of the dangers once conquered by the early colonists began to re-emerge. Then an alarming discovery was made of an expanding desert,

just like the one in the legends of their ancient homeland! Whatever evil had destroyed the home of the original colonists had now come to this land, and would have to be conquered before the entire continent was bathed in a sandy desolation.

Much more exists to our history and rationale than this brief recounting reveals, but enough of our framework has been shown to demonstrate how we solved our problems. We have reasons for why exploration is still needed; the growing desert will threaten some characters and force them to encroach on the lands of other characters. The lack of recent threats and war discourages the use of powerful magic, which, while not in the hands of the adventurers, is still to be found. Infrequent wars and explorations still occur and still produce skilled adventurers, but the very fact that the wars are infrequent explains why endless numbers of these adventurers aren't around.

The growing presence of evil in the land is a great mystery to be solved, a mystery whose solution might take many quests to unravel. This growing evil provides a reason for attacks by evil forces to appear in any place at any time — certainly a risk dread enough to keep players cautious and guessing for a while! We are well satisfied with the rationales used in our history and state of the world, but they did not come about on the first draft of our history. A lot of discussion and development went on between the first ideas and the final version.

When you have developed the history and current state of your world, be sure to discuss it with a couple of friends. They'll be sure to poke a few holes in it, but if you take their suggestions constructively, you might make some improvements in your work.

Review

The term *realism*, as applied to fantasy worlds, is a tricky term with two different meanings. *Realism* measures how well your creations in a campaign match expectations of how the same things would work in real life. Realism concerns itself with believable terrain formations, consistent histories, logical current events, and consistent NPC behavior.

The other side of the coin is *fantasy realism*. Fantasy realism is concerned with how well the fantasy aspects of your campaign conform to the rules of your game system, and, to a certain extent, the precedents of fantasy literature. If a lot of details in your campaign do not match the rules your players think they are playing by, then they can start to get a little surly. When you deviate from the rules, you want to keep the differences to a minimum and warn your players in advance.

What is meant by "precedents of fantasy literature"? If you've created a fantasy element in your campaign and are not quite sure if it works, try to remember something similar to it that you read in a novel at some time. This can help validate or refine your creation so that it fits in smoothly with the rest of your campaign. It is also important to realize that many players participate in the game because of an urge to capture the vicarious experience of adventure that they've found in fantasy novels. I try to keep this in mind when creating a campaign, and I include some features and situations from popular fiction which the players may discover. These literary devices should by no means dominate your campaign, for your own creations should provide the mystery and sense of discovery, but they can certainly spice it up from spot to spot.

Once you've completed creation of your campaign to this point, it's time to step back and take a look at what you've done. You'll want to keep a sharp eye out for violations of the two kinds of realism. Each time you add an element to the campaign (specific terrains, weather, climate, political relationships), you add more realism to the campaign. You also add more complexity, which means a greater chance for errors.

That's the reason to review what you've done. When you're trying to keep track of a dozen different aspects of a campaign world, it's easy to overlook how one might affect all the others.

Ask yourself a few questions. Do the various terrain types fit well together? Does your world's history logically lead up to the current state of events? Have you left plenty of room for exploration and discovery?

(Turn to page 90)

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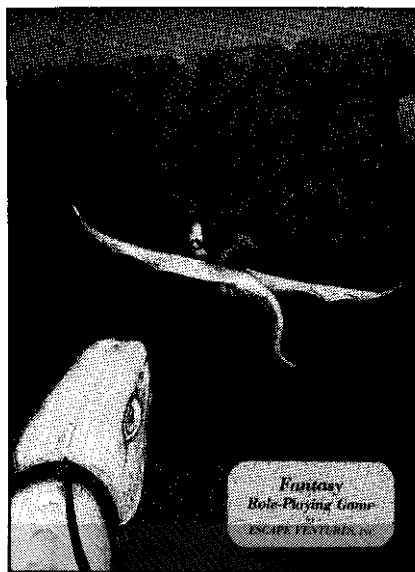
The campaign begins with a history lesson taught by the characters' patron and sage. The characters are told that they are the final hope of Vinya. Ages past, technology and magic flourished, and all was prosperous: The ruling Council of twelve Element Masters permitted widespread research, which finally proved their undoing. Their attempt to rectify the situation resulted in the unbalancing of local forces. It also created a huge influx of destructive creatures and the death of the Council itself. Fortunately, the world was visited by benevolent creatures that held back the destructive ones, providing a opportunity for the inhabitants to establish an unsteady status quo.

Sixty years have passed, and now these hardy adventurers have come of age, each with the potential for Element Magic. It is the quest for power and the salvation of their world that are the goals of those who adventure in Vinya.

Those players — including myself — who became acquainted with the game just after its release, during the 1984 Origins convention, quickly learned to appreciate its good points and to get along with its rough spots. For example, rolling up a character takes more than a little while to perform. On the other hand, however, five beginning characters are supplied, so a campaign can start without the task of generating characters.

Each race has its obvious advantages and disadvantages. For instance, dwarves are stronger and have higher constitutions than other races, but their appearance and skills at riding are lower, on the average, than unspeakables. The unspeakables, though, have higher luck and dexterity scores, but they are not good at hand-to-hand fighting, and they move more slowly. The player, therefore, must determine which race he wishes to role-play before other decisions can be made.

All basic statistics are rolled using 5d4, which tends to result in mostly average characteristics. These abilities include Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, Magic Points, Appearance, and Luck. These can be further affected through military training.



Handedness, and Element Binding, for example — are determined by rolling d100. Element Binding is one of the key points of the game. Each character is bound from birth to the element he or she is destined to control: either air, earth, fire, or water. The element to which one is bound will be the means by which one can prove his or her worthiness. Such proof is achieved through mastery of two weapons and ten non-combat skills.

Many aspects of the system are reminiscent of the RUNEQUEST® game. In that system, adventures roam the world of Glorantha, seeking to improve their skills and gain runes. The combat systems of the RUNEQUEST and *Element Masters* games are quite similar. In both games, hit points, as well as damage, are allocated proportionately to various body parts, determined by the relative weights of those parts.

The melee round in *Element Masters* is broken up into three parts, each of which allows a character to perform an action. Various tasks require different numbers of actions, but a character may, for instance, attack, parry, and heal himself in one round. Action in this game tends to move more rapidly than it might in other systems.

To attack, a player rolls d100 to determine whether or not he hits. If he does hit, he then rolls another d100 to find where he hit the creature. He then determines damage, and all damage is applied to the hit location previously designated. Armor, by the way, deducts from damage rather than changes the chance to hit.

The idea of non-combat skills is very

appealing from a gamemaster's point of view. Each character has his own percentage chance to perform over forty different skills, ranging from the mundane (for example, Foraging, Singing, Telling a Joke, and Cooking) to the esoteric (Knowledge of Legends, Fame Rating, and Ingenious Idea, for instance). These skills seem to encourage the players to think about different ways to accomplish various tasks and to encourage cooperation among characters.

Magic is simple and common in Vinya. Almost anyone with above-average intelligence knows *something* of magic, and can perform at least one or two spells. Each spell costs a certain number of points to learn, and characters start out with a number of spell points with which to learn their beginning spells.

The monsters are well developed, as bizarre as many of them first appear. They range from humorous to terrifying. I'll pit one of the three (that's right, only three) Vinyan dragons against almost anything I can think of. These are critters to negotiate with rather than fight. The monster listings even include complete descriptions of some of the good and evil humans of Vinya.

Accompanying each monster's description is a picture of it. The artwork throughout the book is very good. Some of the pictures are amusing, and a few are rather simplistic; overall, however, the artwork is some of the best I have seen for an fantasy role-playing game.

The weapon and armor lists are quite extensive. Unless a player is looking for something really strange with which to fight, he should find it here. The system even permits the wearing of mixed armor types. So, a beginner may wear a chain hauberk with the remainder of his protection being leather if that's all he can afford.

One of the points that particularly struck me was the detail the designers supplied in some areas. For instance, the character is assigned a home town, determined by a die roll, which may or may not indicate previous training in certain areas. There are also charts for determining how much a character can lift and how much he can carry — both are based on size, weight, strength, and constitution, of course. There are even guidelines for adjusting certain characteristics if a character has an artificial limb. I found the equipment list, as well as the treasure chart, very skimpy, but these are easily expanded.

A player may choose to run a human, elf, dwarf, half-elf, unspeakable (a half-sized human), or a half-tron (Vinya's answer to a human-ogre half-breed). However, players are not limited to these six types alone and

may also role-play some of the bad guys.

After a mission or adventure has been completed, the characters have the opportunity to train themselves. In some cases, this entails finding someone who will train them in whatever areas they wish to improve. However, such is not the case with the non-combat skills. If a character has been fortunate enough to successfully utilize some of his skills during the course of the adventure, then he has a small percentage chance to improve that skill by a few points. Slowly

the characters will improve themselves, hopefully to the point where they may become Element Masters.

Magic items are severely limited; although this can be changed by the gamemaster, this puts more pressure on the players to utilize their existing skills and wits to overcome a situation.

In the back of the book are two detailed examples of game play. One is a fairly normal exchange between characters, and the other depicts combat. Both are very de-

tailed, and both explain each die roll and its respective result. These are extremely useful to the novice gamemaster and player.

All in all, I found the game great fun, as did many others. It could easily develop into a major competitor in the fantasy role-playing market. I have found two adventure modules available for the system so far. If enough gamers show an interest in it, I expect a long and healthy future for *Element Masters*.

— Reviewed by Tom Armstrong

Design + detail = excellence

Starstone FRP module sets a good example

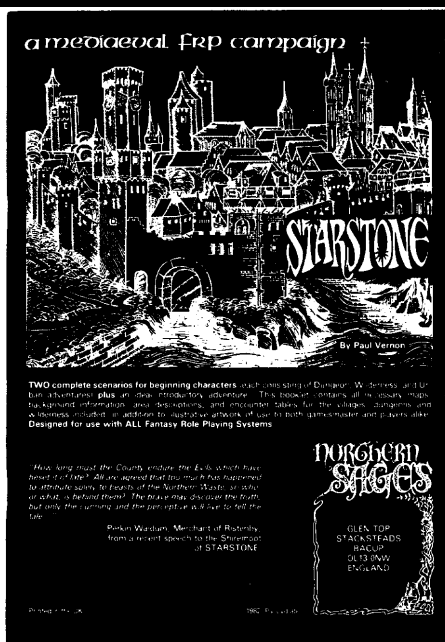
STARSTONE sports an unassuming black-and-white cover which ensures that the product will not be eagerly grabbed off the shelf by buyers attracted to bright colors. Persevering or color-blind consumers will be well rewarded if they are inclined to inspect this module written by Paul Vernon of Northern Sages.

If the name sounds familiar, this may be because Mr. Vernon has been published in *DRAGON® Magazine* ("First, spread the faith" in issue #92). He is also the author of two excellent articles published in *White Dwarf*, "The Town Planner" and "A Quasi-Medieval Economy," as well as a small scenario entitled "Embertrees," which is connected with *Starstone*. Embertrees lies about eight miles west of Sardkirk, one of the towns of *Starstone* County.

For its modest price (retailing at around \$6), *Starstone* contains three related but separate scenarios. Each is packed with enough information that the NPCs in the scenario know less about themselves than the reader does. A fold-out sheet of 16 maps and an outer cover containing two large-scale maps complete the presentation. The module is applicable to any set of FRP game rules.

The introduction to the module is excellent and should be used as an example of creativeness within credulity for all DMs. Attention to details such as feudal obligations sets the stage for the PCs' adventures. Mr. Vernon wisely provides a list of conventions used in this module. This greatly aids interpretation of the material.

The players are eased into the story with a short adventure, "Longbottom Down." This introductory scenario is 39 encounter areas in length and prepares players for the style of play to follow. The connection between the introductory scenario and the two main scenarios is tenuous, so the DM is advised to have a beefy alibi ready for the players to continue towards the main area of action. Once the players have reached the town of Ristenby, the DM's work begins in earnest. This leads to one of the few criti-



cisms I have of the module: Ristenby is not covered in this module. Even more unfortunately, Mr. Vernon has not yet completed the module. If you are the type of DM (as I am) who hates to dissuade the players from their chosen path, you will have to think of reasons for the players not to explore Ristenby; either design it yourself or wait for the module featuring it to come out. Your time would best be spent in studying the contents of this module, because you will absolutely need more than one reading to absorb all the nuances that Mr. Vernon has embedded in the storyline.

The course of events is a little unclear at this point. My advice to the DM upon completing the introductory scenario is to skip to page 13 (the Sardkirk Scenario Introduction), temporarily bypassing the outdoor encounters, and to start reading about five-sixths of the way down the page, where the paragraph states: "It is suggested that upon entering Ristenby for the first time . . ." In my case, doing so made clear several unanswered questions which both-

ered me at the end of the "Longbottom Down" scenario. Peace of mind restored, the DM may leisurely examine the outdoor encounters.

A minor problem exists in this section. Statistics are provided for several new monsters, but descriptions of these monsters are left up to the DM. A short description of the physical appearance of some of these new monsters would not be amiss. A hint is given to the Rubrun's appearance, since the species is described as "scaly rats" in Outdoor Encounter A31, but that is all. Details of this nature should not be left to the referee. The DM should be given description — whether he chooses to use it or make up his own is another matter.

Now that reasons have been provided for the PCs to be in the area, the action centers around the main scenarios: Sardkirk, a gnomish village under harassment by persons unknown, and Dolgold, a racial melting pot being contested by at least four factions. Once introduced, the players will find no desire to have their characters leave until the last obstacle is overcome. Each of these scenarios contains more than 100 encounter areas, a village history, and separate encounter tables.

With the possibility of three different random encounter tables in play at one time, the referee is justifiably advised to plan his random encounters. For example, if the DM rolls a 65 on the Village Visitors Table, it's possible for one of the many visitors to be murdered one day, then appear drinking beer at the Trollfires Tavern the next. A few minutes spent in careful preparation will preserve the DM's untarnished reputation for thoroughness and reliability.

Intricate relationships between NPCs prove to be one of Mr. Vernon's fortes, and this device is used throughout *Starstone* to provide tension and suspense. If I am making *Starstone* sound more like a book with an interesting storyline than a module with a connected series of related monster encounters, then I am getting my point

across. These relationships provide motivation for the NPCs and make the DM's job as referee a little easier. For example, a jilted lover of Dolgold will attribute evil, nocturnal practices to the object of her unrequited affection. Whether her suspicions are justified or not is up to the PCs to decide.

Starstone is one of the best-detailed modules I have examined. If you have the time and the inclination to sample superior module design, buy it. The few faults I have listed in no way detract from the overall presentation. Hopefully, Mr. Vernon will consider these small points and address them for us before the town of Ristenby

appears off the North American coast.

Starstone is distributed in the United States by The Armory, 4145 Amos Avenue, Baltimore MD 21215. Interested consumers should write to that address for information on price and availability if they are unable to find the module at a store.

— Reviewed by Eric W. Pass

More pieces for the puzzle

Thieves' Guild 10 is tasty, but not filling

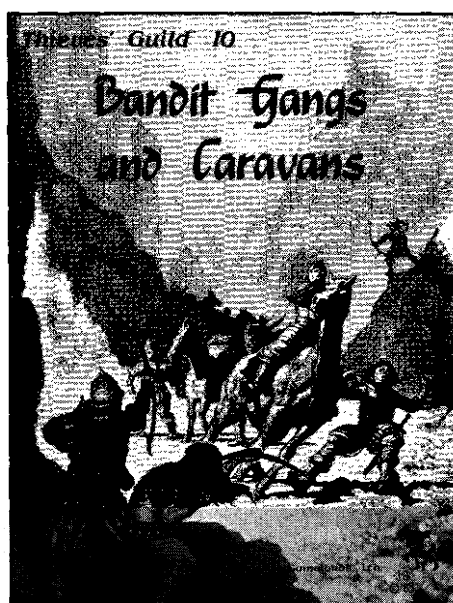
The *Thieves' Guild* series has been doing two things since its inception: providing gamers with creative scenarios in which thieves play a major role (instead of the minor one usually allocated to the party thief), and tantalizing gamers with fragments from a larger rules system. *Thieves' Guild 10 (Bandit Gangs and Caravans)* is no exception. The 36-page book, by Kerry Lloyd, Richard Meyer, John Fonda, and Janet Trautvetter, is produced by Gamelords, Ltd., 18616 Grosbeak Terrace, Gaithersburg MD 20879. It sells for \$5.95.

This is, obviously, the tenth supplement in Gamelords' *Thieves' Guild* series, and as might be expected by now, the rules are getting repetitive. These cover the creation and play of bandit gangs, and they resemble the rules for the creation and play of pirate bands from *TG6*. The values in the tables have been changed, keeping inexperienced bandit leaders from damaging the morale of a bandit gang as much as inexperienced officers will that of a pirate band, but the procedure is the same.

The designers reprinted the procedure here in an effort to localize all the information about bandit gangs in one volume, yet they refer the reader to *TG11* for complete magic rules, I appreciate not having the magic system reprinted, but I fail to see why the designers could not have presented a procedure for gang creation only once, and why they could not have printed new tables (if they were necessary) to use with this procedure for the creation of different gang types rather than waste space with the reprinting of the procedures.

I think this waste of space stems from the presentation of rules in tiny bites, whereas a full meal would have been preferred. The time has come for the complete rules system to be presented. Future *Thieves' Guild* installments could then be devoted to scenarios and societies instead of to new rules, and the resulting product would be more valuable to those who use other game systems.

This is not meant to disparage the *TG* rules system. On the contrary, what I have



seen looks very interesting. I'm just getting tired of having it presented in small dollops. The mass-combat rules are a good case in point. There have been many supplements with incidents which could have led to large-scale combats, but until now, there have been no rules for them.

The mass-combat system is quite playable. Sometimes there seems to be a tremendous amount of dice rolling, but that's just the price you pay for having so many people involved in the fight. The combat system includes sensible rules for resolving mass combats involving player characters. These rules (or something very much like them) are probably already being used by several referees, but if you don't have a way to handle PCs in mass combat yet, this one works quite well and goes a long way towards justifying the price of this book.

But why we — or, at least, I — really buy these books is for the thieving scenarios. I don't often have to referee thief-based adventures in my campaigns, but that doesn't matter. These scenarios are good preparation for the times when I do have to run them, and they also give me a number of

ideas for involving characters in city activities beyond those allowed by the rules.

This book contains one plot, classified as a second-story/cat-burglar scenario. A merchant who has been having good success in financial matters has been neglecting to pay his protection money. This sort of thing cannot be allowed to go unpunished, and so the adventure begins.

The adventure is a short one which can be easily run, using any set of rules. The household of the merchant is well detailed. Each member is given about a half-page of description, including habits, customs, and his or her relationship to the merchant.

The lay of the land, including the neighborhood around the merchant's shop, is also fully described, along with some rumors and information about the merchant which locals believe to be true — whether they actually are true is another case.

This adventure is written for members of the Thieves' Guild in the city of Haven, but if your players aren't running thief characters, they might still become involved. They might be hired by the merchant to protect him from an unspecified danger, for example. Or, they might be happening by when the guild thieves begin to teach the merchant his lesson.

In an effort to hold the price line on these supplements, the page count is down from the earlier ones (48 pages in *TG5*, 64 pages in *TG6*). In itself, this is nothing to complain about — too few companies show this kind of concern for their customers — but along with the drop in pages has come a rise in the proportion of pages devoted to rules (*TG5* had 6 pages of rules out of a total of 48 pages, *TG6* had 36 out of 64, and this one has 20 out of 30).

While the adventure presented in this book is quite enjoyable and almost worth the price, this book marks the point where I, at least, have grown tired of the snippets of rules. If Gamelords would finally publish its rules system, it would have space to present more adventures into the underworld life in Haven, which it does so well.

— Reviewed by Arlen P. Walker

Authentic agencies, part I

Real facts and figures for TOP SECRET® play

by Merle M. Rasmussen

The TOP SECRET® game world is very much like our own, with a few subtle (and not-so-subtle) differences. Most of the same nations exist on the map, and most of the same espionage organizations operate across the globe. In DRAGON® issue #93, some of the spy organizations unique to the TOP SECRET world were described for use in campaign games. But what of the real agencies, such as the CIA, the KGB, and the British Secret Service?

This article is the first in a short series that presents the rest of the world's "Top Secret" community, and it will cover the various American intelligence-gathering agencies. It must be noted that though these agencies exist in the real world, they are given here only as constructs for the TOP SECRET game world. Most of the statistics given below for these agencies are reasonably accurate and are taken from publicly available information, but some of the statistics were invented for the sake of completeness, and some may have been altered to conform to the specific background and nature of the TOP SECRET game world.

Information about these agencies, as with the previous article in issue #93, is presented in several categories (defined below). It is assumed that this information is commonly available to player character agents and to the general public, though the agents might be given additional information that is not public knowledge during the course of a game campaign.

Nature of agency: The basic nature of the organization.

Governing body: The governing body of most intelligence organizations are national governments. The control for government agencies is the government official to whom the chief of the agency reports. Non-government organizations may have a short description of their group listed here.

Personnel: The estimated size of agency staffs based on public sources. Comparisons show the relative size and activity of various agencies.

Annual budget: The U.S. dollar figures shown are estimates based on public sources. Comparisons show the relative size and activity of various agencies.

HQ: The main headquarters for agency operations.

Established: The date the agency was founded.

Activities: Domestic counterintelligence means that the agency is responsible for counterespionage inside the borders of its own country. Foreign counterintelligence

means that the agency has responsible for counterespionage outside the borders of its own country.

Policies: Several of the major laws and philosophies of the organization.

Objectives: The major goals of the organization.

Areas of involvement: The places in which the agency is known to operate or exercise jurisdiction.

Allies: Agencies often share intelligence data formally and informally with one another, when it suits them to do so. Associated agencies do not necessarily share intelligence because of publicly recognized treaties.

Additional data: More information on agency structure, operations, covers, and past history is given here.

Bureaus: If the word "All" is present in this category, the following TOP SECRET bureaus may be active within a particular agency: Administration, Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination (see DRAGON issue #82, "New avenues for agents," for an explanation of the newest bureaus). The DIA serves as the Administration Bureau for Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Intelligence. The KGB is the Administration Bureau for the intelligence agencies of the Warsaw Pact nations.

Alignment profile: An agent trained by a particular intelligence agency will very often develop political opinions that are shared by a majority of fellow agents in the organization. The range of personal opinions an agent has relating to political systems, political change, and economic systems are called his alignment profile. The TOP SECRET alignment system was detailed in DRAGON issue #93, in "Agencies and Alignments" (p. 34).

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Nature of agency: U.S. government executive agency

Governing body: President, U.S.A.

Personnel: 15,000-16,500, including 7,500 operatives

Annual budget: \$1.5 billion

HQ: Langley, Virginia, U.S.A.

Established: 1947

Activities: The CIA coordinates, correlates, evaluates, and disseminates the results of the following types of intelligence: military, strategic, political, economic, biographical, geographical, sociological, scientific, and technical. The CIA is also involved with both domestic and foreign

counterintelligence. It also performs certain services for other intelligence agencies.

Policies: To exploit new technology for the clandestine collection of foreign intelligence, for the conduct of foreign counterintelligence, and for researching and developing technical collection systems

Objectives: The first priority of the CIA is understanding Soviet military strength. Other areas of concern are problems of terrorism, drug trafficking, world energy, and world grain production.

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: DIA, NSA, Army Intelligence, Naval Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, Marine Corp Intelligence, State Department, Energy Department, Treasury Department, FBI, MI6 (British Secret Service) and GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters, United Kingdom)

Additional data: U.S. Special Forces ("Green Berets") are sometimes used to execute CIA plans. The CIA's notorious reputation in the world includes the use of assassination-planning squads known as "Health Alteration Committees."

Bureaus: All

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

National Security Agency (NSA)

Nature of agency: Secret U.S. federal agency

Governing body: Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 95,000 worldwide, including 52,500 at Fort Meade

Annual budget: Over \$2 billion

HQ: Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, U.S.A.

Established: 1952

Activities: Electronic intercept

Policies: All material is excluded from the Freedom of Information Act. The NSA can intercept all foreign and domestic communication if the domestic is proven to be connected to or associated with a foreign government.

Objectives: To intercept signal intelligence (SIGINT), to perform code breaking, and to create U.S. codes

Areas of involvement: All levels of Soviet cipher systems; Korean, Chinese, and other Communist Asian cipher systems; Latin America and all other cipher systems of the world

Allies: CIA, GCHQ

Additional data: The NSA's computers cover 10 subterranean acres. Its post office handles 18,000 pieces of mail per day, and its telephone exchange connects 30,000 calls

a month. Forty tons of classified material are shredded per day. The computers at NSA are tied to the computers at GCHQ by a secret cable system. The NSA's nickname is "No Such Agency."

Bureaus: Administration, Technical,

Operations

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)

Nature of agency: U.S. federal agency

Governing body: Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 7,000

Annual budget: \$9 billion including the NSA

HQ: The Pentagon, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1961

Activities: Military and strategic intelligence. The DIA coordinates the intelligence activities of the military services and manages the Defense Attache System, which assigns military attaches to U.S. embassies around the world.

Policies: To collect and produce intelligence for the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Objectives: To defend the U.S. against all enemies, and to ensure the security of the U.S. and all areas vital to its interests

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: CIA

Additional data: During wartime, photographs are sent back to the U.S. for processing by the DIA, which makes a more concentrated analysis of the information given in the pictures. The DIA and CIA have an interdepartmental rivalry. As noted above, the DIA serves as the Administration Bureau for Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Intelligence.

Bureaus: All

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

United States Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM)

Nature of agency: Field command

Governing body: Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 35,000

Annual budget: \$700 million

HQ: The Pentagon, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1775

Activities: Military and military-related foreign intelligence, counterintelligence, tactical intelligence

Policies: Command Group INSCOM (CGINSCOM) is responsible for fulfilling national-level intelligence, security, electronic warfare, and related functions within the command's operational responsibility.

Objectives: To interact with other Army Field Commands on matters related to intelligence and security training, doctrine, research and development, and logistics

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: DIA

Additional data: The CGINSCOM commands Army Intelligence and security units above corps level in the U.S. and overseas.

INSCOM performs intelligence and security functions in support of the Department of the Army and other major Army commands, and it can support commanders in the field.

Bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination

Alignment profile: 01-19/20-94/07-81

Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI)

Nature of agency: Office of the Department of the Navy

Governing body: Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 20,000

Annual budget: \$600 million

HQ: The Pentagon, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1882

Activities: Military (especially naval) intelligence

Policies: To support naval operations through three supporting commands: Naval Intelligence Command (NAVINTCOM), Naval Security Group (NSG), and Naval Investigative Service (NIS).

Objectives: To provide intelligence via NAVINTCOM and cryptology (less signal security) via NSG. Information security, counterintelligence and counterterrorism, law enforcement, and investigative matters are provided by NIS.

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: DIA

Additional data: It is reported that the

Navy has a worldwide maritime spy effort composed of business fronts and recruited nationals as agents in more than 140 locations. It replaces Task Force 157 and is called Task Force 168. The NIS is primarily a civilian-staffed law enforcement organization responsible for providing investigative support in matters involving serious crimes committed by or against Naval personnel; its investigations into fraud and other criminal activities have saved the Navy millions of dollars in equipment loss or damage. In 1983, the NIS employed 1350 outside personnel, of which 770 were agents. The Navy also has a fully integrated reserve intelligence force of well-trained civilian specialists.

Bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination

Alignment profile: 01-19/20-94/07-81

Air Force Intelligence Service (AFIS)

Nature of agency: Special operating agency under HQ USAF

Governing body: Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 56,000

Annual budget: \$2.7 billion

HQ: Fort Belvoir, Virginia, U.S.A.

Established: 1947

Activities: To perform military intelligence by conducting in-depth all-source research, directing collection activities, processing and disseminating intelligence information, and exercising management

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and control of all intelligence systems and special security systems.

Policies: To contribute to the deterrence of potential actions by foreign parties that would conflict with U.S. and allied interests; to increase the probability of success for aerospace power to conclude hostilities on terms favorable to U.S. and allied interests; to improve the effective conduct of other military operations

Objectives: To provide decision-makers with information on current and estimated foreign military activities, strategy, tactics, capabilities, and intentions; to reduce decision-making risks associated with national security policy and the structuring, posturing, and employment of U.S. military forces

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: DIA

Additional data: Among the U.S. military services, the Air Force has the largest intelligence program. Its Foreign Technology Division is a leading national source of analysis of foreign aircraft and missiles.

Bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination

Alignment profile: 01-19/20-94/07-81

National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)

Nature of agency: Office under the Department of the Air Force

Governing body: Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S.A.

Personnel: 4,000 included in AFIS

Annual budget: Over \$2 billion included in Air Force operations

HQ: Fort Belvoir, Virginia, U.S.A.

Established: 1961

Activities: Military intelligence

Policies: To oversee the development and operation of spy satellites and the operation of secret Space Shuttle missions.

Objectives: To photograph foreign territory, and to monitor international communications

Areas of involvement: Worldwide

Allies: CIA, DIA, NSA, and Air Force Intelligence

Additional data: The NRO handles the routine operation of spy satellites. It is believed that during the late 1960s and early 1970s, U.S. surveillance satellites were turned on American antiwar demonstrations and urban riots in an effort to determine crowd size and activities involved. Military Space Shuttle launches from Vandenberg AFB, California, U.S.A., are also managed by the NRO.

Bureaus: Technical and Operations

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

United States Marine Corps Intelligence

Nature of agency: Office of the USMC

Governing body: Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Personnel: 5550

Annual budget: \$140 million

HQ: The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.,

Established: 1775

Activities: Primarily amphibious tactical warfare intelligence

Policies: To support commanders at all echelons in the conduct of operations

Objectives: To provide intelligence for the Fleet Marine Forces and their task-oriented Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) through a triad of organizations: Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC), Marine Corps Development and Education Command (MCDEC), and the Fleet Marine Forces

Areas of involvement: Worldwide coastal areas

Allies: DIA, Naval Intelligence

Additional data: HQMC is responsible for counterintelligence, plans and estimates, signals intelligence, electronic warfare, intelligence management (personnel, training, and research and development), and national intelligence activities. MCDEC provides support in the areas of research, development, education, and training. The Fleet Marine Forces contain the operational intelligence capability that supports MAGTFs.

Bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination

Alignment profile: 01-19/20-94/07-81

Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State (SBI)

Nature of agency: U.S. government

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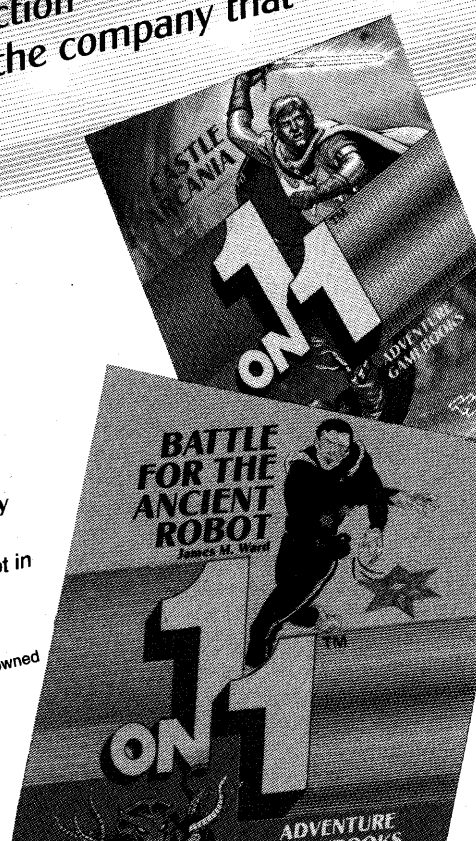
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Governing body: Secretary of State, U.S.A.

Personnel: 350

Annual budget: \$12.5 million

HQ: 15th St. & Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1789

Activities: Strategic, political, and some economic intelligence

Policies: To advise the President in formulating and executing foreign policy

Objectives: To promote U.S. interests in international relations

Areas of involvement: U.S. diplomatic and consular posts abroad

Allies: CIA

Additional data: The SBI coordinates the Department of State's relations with foreign intelligence operations.

Bureaus: Administration, Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, and Operations

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Nature of agency: U.S. federal bureau

Governing body: Attorney General, U.S.A.

Personnel: 19,000 employees; 7,800 are Special Agents

Annual budget: \$555 million

HQ: J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1908

Activities: Foreign counterintelligence

Policies: To perform duties other than the agency's objectives specifically imposed by law or Presidential directive, and to conduct service activities for other law enforcement agencies

Objectives: To investigate violations of certain federal statutes, and to collect evidence in cases in which the U.S. is or may be an interested party

Areas of involvement: Within the U.S.A.

Allies: CIA and MI5

Additional data: The FBI has 59 field offices located in major cities throughout the U.S.A. and in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The FBI had fingerprint files on 64,680,080 persons as of February 1, 1979. The FBI has an Academy at Quantico, Virginia. The National Institute of Justice, with an annual budget of \$1.5 million a year for crime

analysis, provides state and local law enforcement agencies with FBI facilities.

Bureaus: All

Alignment profile: 01-19/20-81/07-81

Department of the Treasury

Nature of agency: U.S. government executive department

Governing body: U.S.A.

Personnel: 300

Annual budget: \$10 million

HQ: 15th & Pennsylvania Av., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: 1789

Activities: Collects foreign financial and monetary intelligence, and assists the Department of State in collecting economic intelligence

Policies: To manage national finances, to provide currency, to maintain U.S. credit, to represent the U.S. in international banking and monetary organizations, to collect taxes, and to supervise the Secret Service

Objectives: (In addition to the above) To protect the President, the Vice-President, the President-Elect, all major Presidential candidates, and the families of all of the above

Allies: CIA, Department of State

Additional data: The Department of the Treasury controls a worldwide narcotics investigation bureau. It also administers the Customs Service; the Internal Revenue Service; the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; the Bureau of the Mint; the Bureau of

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; and the Bureau of the Public Debt.

Bureaus: Administration, Investigation, Technical, and Operations

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81

Department of Energy (DOE)

Nature of agency: U.S. government executive department

Governing body: United States of America

Personnel: 300

Annual budget: \$20 million

HQ: 1000 Independence Ave., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Established: August 1977

Activities: Political, economic, and technical intelligence concerning foreign energy matters

Policies: To promote conservation, resource development and production, research, data management, and environmental protection and regulation related to energy

Objectives: To carry out the national energy policy

Allies: CIA

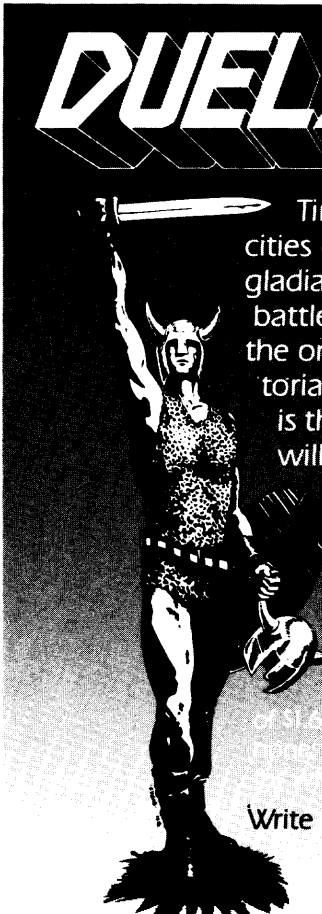
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LUNAE, ASSASSIN FOR THE WITCH Queen of the Hinterlands, paused in silence before the large stone door. <LISTEN, SMELL> There was no sound beyond the latched opening, but she had learned to distrust silence in this place. The walls were cubits thick. The door, though balanced to open with a light shove, was itself more than a foot thick and, when closed, was sealed nearly airtight. Sound never traveled far in this twisty, dusty place, but the smells that the men and the beasts left behind had proved especially trustworthy to her.

She moved her torch to her left hand and leaned closer to the edge of the door, where she might catch a whiff of the scents within. There was, as always, a faint man-scent and the musty tang of some beast that must frequent this set of corridors. She hoped never to meet that one in the flesh. There was something . . . compelling about that scent. She feared it. But now, there seemed to creep from behind the door a new scent — the smell of spice!

If there was any chance of a man behind the door, she had better be ready for a fight. The catacombs were more wild and dangerous than any other place she had been. There was gold here, and of course, there was greed. *Strike first!* had proved themselves sure words of wisdom in the seemingly endless time she had spent in the dark, dusty halls. Lunae took stock of herself. She had eaten hours ago, and she was in fighting trim. The tools of her trade were ready to her fingers. It was a momentary temptation to pass by this door, but she had no idea if this corridor would provide another exit soon enough to avoid the creature with the musty scent. There was no reason to delay. Her torch was more than half gone. Going back was out of the question.

<OPEN THE DOOR> The latch worked smoothly, but the hinges did not. The door moved unevenly with the popping grind of a stone pivot.

<LOOK> Glowstone lit the roomy chamber with its cool blue light. <PUT OUT TORCH> There were signs of travelers. A torn leather sack lay on a large, flat boulder next to a trickling spring. The rivulet barely parted the dust on the floor before vanishing into a fault-line crack. That dust was well stirred by prints of man and beast. The hoofprints amazed her. *Lead a pack animal down into the catacombs? The alone in this scents place would spook it.*

Two other stone doors faced her. This was a cross-roads, if that term could be used in these underground passages. She quickly moved to check them. <LISTEN AT DOORWAYS> There was never too much caution in this place.

There were no sounds, and the smells of this oft-used waystop masked anything that might be beyond them. A set of conveniently placed boulders were at hand, so she blocked all three entrances.

"Thank you." It was a man's voice.

<PIVOT LOW, PLACE THROWING KNIFE IN LEFT HAND, LOOK>

Catacomb

by Henry Melton

Illustrations by Larry Day

She spun into a crouch, ready to throw her knife as soon as she spotted a target. Though it wasn't terribly bright, the glowstone light shone evenly enough to wash out shadows. A man could hide in two or three places among the jumble of boulders where the spring was sourced. Lunae was painfully aware that she was without the smallest boulder to protect her from any thrown weapon. She shifted her stance to give her better mobility. *Stupid! I've spent too much time getting this far into the catacombs to be killed by some clever thief.* There was nowhere to run. The doors were tightly wedged by the boulders she'd so carefully moved into place!

"Nervous one, aren't you? You could at least say 'hello.'"

She had his hiding place located now. There was a crack between the stones through which he watched her. He was shielded from her knife, but if she could reach the brass vial of contact poison in her pack . . . <STAND UP SLOWLY, SAY: "YOU STARTLED ME. I EXPECTED TO BE ATTACKED . ", TAKE A STEP TOWARDS MY PACK>

He had not attacked even though he had an obvious tactical advantage. Perhaps she could reach —

He spoke. "I would appreciate it if you stayed right where you are!" She froze, her mind in high gear. He could have a nocked arrow aimed her way. If so, the aim would be hampered by the very rocks that protected him; no other weapon would have a better chance. He was either stupid or bluffing.

<DIVE INTO A ROLL, GRAB MY PACK, USE MY PACK AS A SHIELD, GET THE BOTTLE OF POISON> She felt the embossed bottle in her pack just as the stinging bite of a dart found her arm. Lunae fought for consciousness as a wave of buzzing darkness rushed over her.

YOU HAVE BEEN RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS
BY A POISONED DART.

YOU ARE LOGGED OFF CATACOMB FOR
00:30 MINIMUM.

YOUR ACCOUNT BALANCE IS:

\$ 0.78 FOR TODAY
\$ 12.40 FOR THE GAME
\$ 7.50 TREASURE BONUS
{RESERVED}

JUDITH STARED MOROSELY AT HER SCREEN. Fat chance her treasure would be there when she checked back. Even money that Mr. Hide-and-Seek would kill her and she'd have to create another character. She bunched her right hand into a fist and hit the desktop. A stack of papers were knocked off the desk and landed on the floor with a fluid plop.

"Judith?" her father's voice called from his office room down the hall. "Is anything wrong?"

Her finger stabbed the PAGE CLEAR key, and she called back, "No, Daddy. I just transposed a field. No problem." Her voice shook a little and her hand hurt. She didn't need to lose her temper. CATACOMB was

proving to be a harder way to make money than she had hoped.

Her gaze rested guiltily on the scattered pile of handwritten invoices that she needed to key into a file as her task for the day. Best get to it. Father wasn't one to let the kids slide on their chores. Even if she was seventeen, he could make her feel like her brother Georgie caught with forbidden cookie crumbs all over his face. Maybe he wouldn't mind her CATACOMB adventures, but play before work was against the house rules.

She picked up the first paper and invoked the home database. *Get the file built, then check on Lunae again.*

* * *

YOU ARE UNCONSCIOUS FROM THE
EFFECTS OF A POISONED DART.
LOGON TO CATACOMB IS NOT ALLOWED
FOR 00:14 MINIMUM.

YOUR ACCOUNT BALANCE IS:

\$ 0.78 FOR TODAY
\$ 12.40 FOR THE GAME
\$ 0.00 TREASURE BONUS

Thief! Well, at least he left her alive.

She cleared the screen and plopped down on her bed. Her flute case, half buried among books and cosmetics on her dressing table, was a black reminder of her problems. It was not going as she had planned. The ruby stolen from Lunae wasn't worth much in real money, but she'd counted on it to cover part of her time charges for playing the game until she could find more treasure. The three hundred dollars was due in two weeks. To be twelve dollars in the hole was not only depressing, it was embarrassing. She shouldn't have told Diana about her plan.

With a whoop, Barry skidded into her room and was followed by Jay, his friend from the house down the hill. A pair of suction-cup darts crossed in the air, one of them bouncing off the mirror of her dressing table.

"Barry, get out of my room this instant! You're messing up everything." She picked up the expended plastic dart and tossed it out the doorway.

"Hey! That's my dart!"

"Then go get it, brat!"

From down the hall, her father's voice silenced them both, "You kids be quiet. It's work time. Barry, do you want some file maintenance? Judith, are your invoices done?"

They both knew silence was the safest course. Barry gave her a silent sneer as his brotherly token of disrespect and waved Jay out with him. If there had been a silent way of murdering her brother . . .

LUNAE CAME TO CONSCIOUSNESS WITH the feel of her pack under her head as a pillow. Her thief had left her stretched out comfortably, concealed behind the rocks that had protected him. <TAKE INVENTORY> A quick survey of her pack and her person revealed only the ruby missing. Even her

weapons were still in their places. She was puzzled. Most thieves would have left her dead and sold her provisions back to the Wizard of the Gate.

<SMELL, LISTEN> The smell of the thief was quite strong in the coffin-sized hidey-hole. He'd obviously spent considerable time waiting there for victims. She crawled from behind the rocks carefully. No one was in sight. A glance told her that the thief had cleared all three doorways and had obscured any footprints in the dust.

<STATE HOW I AM> The effects of the poison lingered in her system. She felt more tired than she ought, and quick motion was an invitation to dizziness. But it should wear off quickly. Her only question now was whether she should follow her thief in order to turn the tables on him and recover her ruby, or search out another treasure before her supplies ran out and she had to make for the Wizard's Gate.

Before she could shoulder her pack, the decision was taken away from her. A sudden wave of acid stench hit her. Out of nothingness stepped trouble. The dim light of glowstone was adequate, this time, to tell her quite enough: a Tor beast!

Adventurers into the catacombs perforce did business with the Wizard of the Gate to purchase their supplies, but more than gold pieces and bronze weapons were exchanged at the Wizard's market. Rumor and outright lies about the hazards and treasure in the catacombs were bought and sold as well. And nothing said about the teleporting half-man/half-beasts that searched the chambers was comforting. Some said Tor beasts were adventurers from another plane, given access by some other Wizard of the Gate, perhaps one of their own number. They were not animals. They walked upright and sometimes were known to use magic. They didn't use swords because they didn't need one.

<PLACE THROWING KNIFE IN THE LEFT HAND, PLACE SHORT SWORD IN THE RIGHT HAND> She didn't attack. Armored like a beetle, with hands like the paws of a tiger, the Tor beast topped her five-foot height by six inches and outweighed her by at least two hundred pounds. The pelt — if it was a pelt — formed a half-dozen rings about his torso, and a ridge of bluish-black shag from one claw, across the shoulders, to the other. The head was piggish, but the eyes betrayed an intelligent malevolence. Its growl as he spotted her was a deep bass that seemed to shake her insides. Nothing in the rumors she had heard told of how to kill one.

The Tor beast seemed to have no such worry. It turned and stalked towards her with the body-twisting gait of a bear. She threw her knife directly toward where a navel would have been, had the thing been born. The knife stuck, for an instant, before the beast shook it loose. The wound only mad it more angry.

Lunae was moving up on the rocks before her knife had left her fingers. The beast was powerful, but she was much lighter on her feet. She picked up her pack by the straps and slung it at the thing's head.

Maybe the Tor beast walked slow, but there was nothing sluggish about the way it snatched the pack out of the air and ripped it wide open with its claws.

Her goods spilled out, and she felt sick as the beast, with an angry growl, ground her food supply and spare torches to mush and toothpicks.

Then the monster crouched and jumped ten feet in one motion, landing on the boulders just below where Lunae stood. She scrambled higher, using her sword to keep him at a distance. It didn't work. Its arm shot out, a blur. Then — pain; she barely held onto the sword as the beast batted it aside. With the stench of the creature wafting over her and the sick feeling that her sword was bent, she grabbed the hilt with both hands and forced all her strength into a sideways stroke. Her sword twisted and slid out of her grip as the warped blade slapped rather than cut the beast.

The thing roared. She could almost feel the bone-shattering slap she knew the monster could give her. But the slap never came. The moment of grace wasn't wasted. As well as she could with the ruined sword in her grasp, she rolled over the top of the mound, down into the coffin-sized pit where she had regained her consciousness.

The beast roared again. She knew the monster would be down on her the instant it navigated the rocks. The blade — now that she had a second to actually look at it — was in bad shape. Both bent and twisted, it would never take the force of an attack, even if the beast could be tricked into falling on it. It would bend like a hair-pin. She gambled precious seconds in hopes of straightening the sword blade. She wedged the blade halfway into a crack in the rock and shoved all of her slight weight against it. When the blade was far short of perfection, but perhaps usable, she pulled the sword loose and held it ready.

For a hurried breath or two, she waited. There was silence in the chamber. Then the Tor beast growled, but it sounded. . . weaker. Gambling again: <LOOK THROUGH THE CRACKS> The limited view gave a puzzling sight. The thing was staggering, struggling to keep its balance.

Enlightenment hit. The poison! She looked to the chamber floor, where the fragments of her belongings were scattered. Among the debris was a bit of metal that might have been the brass bottle smashed flat by a powerful foot.

What would the poison do to it? A human would be dead the instant a drop touched skin. Could the Tor beast shake off the effects? The creature was very powerful. Perhaps it had protective magic. If it recovered, she didn't want to be around.

But, there was always treasure. Magical beasts often collected treasure themselves. If her Tor beast died, she wanted anything of value it might have. She hefted the sword in her hand. Perhaps she could assist the poison a bit.

Shortly, the monster stumbled and fell. She was up and over her rocky barricade in an instant.

The beast was on its back, still struggling against the powerful convulsions the poison was creating in its muscles. Fighting against its own mutinous body, the Tor beast desperately grabbed at a black leather arm band that circled its left arm just above the elbow. The

creature's life or death fueled its determination. If it could work the band's secrets, it might yet survive.

That's it! The Tor beast's magic is in that arm band! Lunae watched its struggles for an instant more, then danced in close for an opportunity to slash at the arm with her sword. It cut the monster's flesh, but not deeply. She did it again. And again. Finally, arm and body were separated. She kicked the still twitching member out of the beast's reach and waited for the monster to die. Blood, looking black in the blue light of the chamber, squirted forcefully from the severed arteries. Quickly, it stopped.

The trained assassin normally had no qualms examining a dead body, but something alien in it chilled her as she stepped near. The stench, now so much stronger in the spilled blood, made it difficult to breathe. The feel of the body was like an upholstered leather chair which remained warm from the life of the person who had sat there. It seemed surprisingly soft. Lunae expected hard, armor-like plate.

She searched the corpse for any natural or artificial pouches, pockets, or bags — anywhere the beast might have stored something of value. Within a minute, she admitted defeat. *Logical. Any being who can teleport won't keep too many possessions on his body, since he can go get them in an instant.*

As she felt the body, it grew softer by the moment. When she noticed this curious fact, she quit instantly and backed away.

Starting at the beast's chest, the body quivered slightly. Then it began to liquefy. In the dim light, her eyes could just make out thousands of sprouts, much like the fur on moldy bread. Tendrils of terribly rapid decay covered the body in half a minute. Slime from the rotting flesh dripped to the floor and formed a thickening flow to join the trickle of the spring.

In disgust, she turned from the sight to spot the beast's arm. It was whole. There seemed to be no sign of the decay that had already turned the body into an unrecognizable mound. Gingerly, she approached it. A cautious touch — first with the point of the sword, then with her hand — gave the impression of teak wood covered with leather. There was no softness. Quickly, before the decay could start, she slipped the arm band off the dead limb.

The band was made of flexible leather with a ridge of worked metal along both edges. *It looks like silver, maybe. Almost the right size for a belt. It will sell. Magic always sells.* She eyed the claws. The arm, separated from the body, seemed to be spared the extremely fast decay. *That might sell too, but I want no part of it!*

The arm band slipped loosely over her shoulder like a coil of rope. As of the moment, it, her sword, and the pair of knives she had hidden in her clothes were her only possessions. What was not smashed was probably contaminated with the spilled poison. It would not be safe to touch for another day. With no supplies, no food, no torches for light, she might be dead by then.

The Wizard's Gate was too distant for her to travel without food, even if she could make the way in total

darkness. There was really only one thing she could do: pursue her thief. Since he had spared her life, perhaps she could persuade him to give her provisions in exchange for some service. If not, perhaps she could steal from him what she needed to survive. Following him seemed to be worth the effort.

Yet the darkness still posed a problem. If only the glowstones could be used for lighting! But they were far too dim. Unless there existed a chamber lined entirely with glowstones like this one, the journey would have to be done in the dark.

She walked to each doorway and carefully sniffed the air. The stench of the beast covered everything, but her sensitive nose could still detect other scents.

"Judith! Supper!" Barry called from the base of the stairs up to her opened door.

Oh no! I must chase him before the scent gets cold.

"Just a minute! I've got to log off."

This was a horrible time to stop and search for a shelter. She grabbed a fist-sized piece of glowstone. Its light would be useless more than a few inches away, but it was the only light she had. With more desperation than confidence, she glided as swiftly as she dared down the length of the corridor. With her sword sheathed, she let the fingertips of her left hand feel for openings in the wall. She believed she was passing a dozen perfect shelters on the right-hand wall. Only two things were clear in the darkness: her time was running out, and thief's scent was tantalizingly present.

If she had only gone back, retraced her path toward the Gate, she would have known exactly where to shelter. She imagined the crypt carved in the wall, where she had spent the night before her disastrous encounter with the thief. That would be ideal.

"Judith! It's getting cold." It was her father's voice this time.

"Coming!" If I log off now, Lunae will seek shelter and attempt to fight off attackers like a dim-witted robot programmed and operated by the computer. Her only real chance for survival is for her to find shelter under her own power.

At that instant her hand felt a carved doorsill in the rock. Not knowing nor caring what creature might be waiting within, she pushed aside the stone doorway. Groping about the room, Lunae found a foot-long stone slab that could be used as a deadbolt in order to seal the chamber from almost any terror that roamed the corridors. She dropped her glowstone and secured the door.

There was barely enough room to lie down in the closet-sized, cold rock crypt, but she didn't care.

JUDITH RAPIDLY KEYED THE LOGOFF AND dashed out of her room, not waiting to view the message on the screen. . . .

YOUR ACCOUNT BALANCE IS:

\$ 1.58 FOR TODAY

\$ 13.20 FOR THE GAME

\$???.?? TREASURE BONUS

(RESERVED) (CONDITIONAL = 53)

Supper was a table piled high with leaves. Even the meat loaf had green things in it. Mother was in that stage of gardening when she was spending fifteen hours a day just trying to keep up with the production.

A strong scent of spices and vinegar drifted in from the kitchen. Judith smiled at the thought that Lunae's sensitivities were infecting her own. She had seen other



kids mimic the dress and habits of their on-line characters. But she wasn't going to start carrying a dagger up her sleeve!

Father had a distant, preoccupied look. Judith could sympathize with that condition better than her mother could. She and her father were the family members who spent the most hours on the terminals. The world on the other side of the glass tube absorbed one's attention.

Mother was giving a running commentary on her battles with the leaf miners and the fire ants. This was her year for trying totally organic gardening, and she constantly missed the use of

her chemical weapons to fight against the ravaging hordes.

Barry was unsympathetic. "Why don't you just use that white powder stuff you used last year? We won't tell on you."

"That's enough." Father had less interest in the war against the insects than Barry did, but there was such a thing as parental solidarity. "Barry, I won't need your help for a couple of days. It sounds like Mother could use a couple of spare hands with the garden. Starting in the morning."

"Aww! Come on, Dad! Jay and Toot and me we've got a COMMANDER game in the morning!" Barry visibly reined in his indignation and picked at the spinach leaves on his plate. To Judith's sisterly eye, it was an obviously staged acquiescence. Father would never stand for open disobedience.

"Just where were you going to have this game?" Father made the word sound indecent. "At home or at the arcade terminal?"

"Well," Barry spoke cautiously, "the graphics are better at Spacer's World than at home. And the faster baud rate there would give me an edge."

"Just how were you going to pay for the time?"

Barry glanced up at his father's impassive face and spotted the smirk on Judith's. He mumbled something no one could hear and took another bite of the salad.

Father continued, "If I recall correctly, you blew all

of last week's allowance on COMMANDER. I heard you ask your mother for some money yesterday. Since allowance day is the day after tomorrow, I don't see where you could have gotten any money to pay for your game tomorrow. Since I don't suppose Spacer's World gives credit, you wouldn't be able to play there tomorrow anyway. And since your games-account suspension here at home doesn't run out for another two weeks, you couldn't play here either.

"So, it seems to me that you will have plenty of time to help your mother in the garden. Isn't that right?"

Judith felt a little sympathy for Barry. Not much, but a little. Father's logical traps were painful. There were ways to pay for game time that Barry could have lined up, but these were either forbidden or unacceptable methods. Who in the family could forget the time Barry's games account was suspended because he had charged several games to Father's business account?

"Judith," her mother asked, "could you help me clean up after supper? I need to run to the store."

Judith resigned herself to the delay and nodded. Now was not the time to plead that she had a game in progress. Barry shot her a sneer on general principles.

BARTON CREEK MALL HAD CHANGED over the years. Judith didn't particularly like to shop there with her mother. It was a fun place if you went there with friends, but mothers were different. Most of the larger department stores had gone on-line and were gradually deserting the shopping malls. Sears and Penneys had left, leaving their areas subdivided into an Arabian maze of market stalls. The mall was the place to go to sample a dozen varieties of egg rolls, to buy hand-carved earrings, or to lose a few hours in a COMMANDER booth.

A trio of players, just old enough to grow beards, were waiting for a booth outside the entrance to an arcade and watching the pair of them as they walked by. Mother didn't seem to notice, but Judith was glad she wasn't alone. Lunae could handle any trouble from the likes of them, but Judith wouldn't even know how to handle one of her sleeve daggers.

She shook her head to rid herself of the thoughts. Those boys weren't like her thief, out for trouble in a lawless world. Maybe the mall did have some permanent residents that were a bit smelly, but no one was going to accost her mother and her during prime time.

They shopped their way through a bottle shop, an herb market, and an office supply house. Then, at Judith's urging, they stopped for a slice of pizza.

"We're not too far from Reitz. Did you want to stop and get that practice book you asked for?" Mother asked.

"No. Not tonight." Diana worked at that shop. She didn't want to see her just yet.

Mother frowned and put down her pizza. "Now, Judith, you aren't going to give up on your music just because Brentwood Academy doesn't have a school band program, are you? They have a nice orchestra!"

"No! I'm not going to quit." Judith bit back. "I like my music. It's you and Father who are trying to take

me away from all the good teachers and all my friends."

"Now, Judith. You know we are only trying to get the best education for you and Barry. Brentwood isn't a big high school, but they have excellent teachers."

"And no music program."

"No band. They do have an orchestra. Are you sure you are interested in the music, not the football g a m e s ? "

"Mother, that's not true!" And with a flushed face, Judith left the table and headed out the shop. Her mother, a little flushed herself, picked up the packages and followed.

Judith paid no attention to the other people in the mall as she made for the parking lot. *I'll show them. I'll get the money, go to the music camp, and make a showing that'll force them to see where my talents lie.*

LUNAE WOKE WITH ONLY THE LIGHT of a single glowstone to greet her. **<TAKE INVENTORY, STATE HOW I AM>** She was hungry. But there were no torches, no food, no water. The leather band was still looped over her shoulder.

If it weren't for that, she might have given up right there. Dying would cost her nothing, but reincarnating in another character would. And while still in possession of a rare, possibly magical, artifact, she just might survive and turn her find into a treasure bonus.

The chamber — from what she could tell by feel and from examination at a nose-bumping distance with glowstone in hand — looked exactly like the chamber in which she spent the previous night. She stuffed the glowstones under her tunic and unbolted the door.

<SMELL, LISTEN> The musty scent gagged her. If there were any scent of her thief, it was masked. She just stood there, engulfed by the odor. Something about it seemed to dull her reactions. To her right, from the direction she had come, she heard a scraping, plopping, near-liquid sound, as if three tons of gelatin were moving down the corridor toward her.

<GET BACK INSIDE THE CHAMBER, LOCK THE DOOR> Her body started to move in response to her intent; however, it didn't follow through. Her arm reached for the door, but it stopped in mid-air. It was the numbing scent that had her in its spell.

<TURN LEFT> She half turned. The sound of the approaching creature was noticeably nearer.

<TURN LEFT> Now that she no longer faced her approaching doom, talk overheard at the Wizard's Gate came back to her. This was the CATACOMB's garbage collector. It was so huge that it entirely filled the width and height of the corridor; it digested anything organic in its path. Nothing she had heard, however, warned her of its stupefying scent.

<MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD> It worked! **<MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD>** She moved. Okay. Simple actions only.

<MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD>

MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD> She wasn't moving fast, but neither was her musty friend. **<MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE LEFT FOOT FORWARD, MOVE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD>**...

Fifty yards ahead of the gelatinous mound, the effects of the scent began to lessen, and she broke into a run. Still sightless, she tried to pace herself, so that striking a wall wouldn't hurt her too badly.

Several times she scraped her arm against the left side of the corridor as she drifted too close to the wall. The surface wasn't exactly smooth, more like mason work than natural stone. This corridor resembled the one she had traveled prior to finding the glowstone chamber, so she was not surprised when her fingertips felt a large stone door. She stopped.

The blob of gelatin was far behind, but she had no doubt that it would get to her soon enough if she didn't find shelter. She tried the door. It opened with a popping, grinding sound.

To her light-starved eyes, the glowstone seemed to light the chamber brightly. The stench of Tor beast mixed with the old scents of spice, mule, and the faint odor of her thief. The same chamber? Was her sense of direction that far off?

But, first things first. She picked up a familiar boulder and barricaded the door separating her from old acid-and-quivery. Her warped sword slid quickly from its sheath, and she made a quick attack on the hidey-hole and skewered the empty air hiding there. Only then did she barricade the other two doors and take time for a survey.

The Tor beast was nothing more than a small mound of rich soil — as was the severed arm. The same decay had taken it as well. The beast had thoroughly destroyed her supplies, so nothing usable was left. Her thief was still her only hope. She found the source of the spring and drank, then she unblocked the doors and followed her nose.

It was puzzling. The air of this corridor did not include the musty scent, but was scented strongly with the smell of her thief. But it was the same one — wasn't it? — that she had looped around just hours before. She paced slowly and silently. The only sound was an occasional grumble from her stomach. When her fingertips failed to find the chamber again, she began to doubt her memory.

Okay, this is a different corridor. I missed a turn somewhere. But this is my thief's trail. She slowed her pace, trying to coax images from the darkness and to read messages into the scents.

The air was more moist here than in the glowstone chamber. There was the scent of her thief and other people, but his was the strongest. There was no trace of the pack animal or the spices, but torches aplenty had passed this way. There were a dozen fainter smells, some too elusive for her to place, but a mental picture

of the place could be etched.

Her thief was just that: a thief. It wasn't a case of two paranoid adventurers having a casual shootout with the victor taking the spoils. Her thief regularly patrolled this set of corridors. He used the hidey-hole in the glowstone chamber — and undoubtedly secret places in other chambers — to waylay adventurers who passed by, collecting any treasures from his victims. No one who prowled this world could have any pretense of a moral position, but knowing what kind of person he was, it made it a little easier to do what she planned.

Finally, the corridor branched at a T-junction. The scent was freshest to the left, so she followed it. Not a hundred yards past the branch was a chamber door blocked open. There was no light within. He was in there. She knew it.

She made no sound, and she had no light. There was a very good chance that he was not expecting anyone. Even if he expected her to follow, he had left her with torches. Could she sneak inside and surprise him? Did she have a chance? She had no supplies. He was probably well stocked. At any moment, he could close and bar the door against the creatures of the catacomb for his nighttime snooze.

She shed the sword and hid the glowstone where it would not betray her position. One dagger she held with her teeth. Carefully, she slipped through the doorway and flattened out against the wall on the inside. She intended to stay motionless like that until he betrayed his location.

Pfft! There was the sound and the sudden sting of a dart in her left hand.

Oh, no! Not again!

<SLIP TOR ARM BAND HALF WAY DOWN ARM, TWIST ARM BAND IN TO TOURNIQUET WITH THE DAGGER IN MY TEETH, PLUCK OUT DART, FALL DOWN, HIDE LEFT ARM UNDER MY BODY>

Her arm and hand began to throb uncomfortably under her, but the drug was contained, at least for the

moment. With her good hand she fished out the other dagger. She played 'possum.

The sound of a rustle was masked by the rocks. The thief was lighting a torch.

"Very good, whoever you are. And if you are still awake."

The light flared, and she closed her eyes to slits.

"Oh, it's you! Little Miss Ruby with all the nasty stuff in her pack. You must be pretty hard up to track me down for just a little trinket like that. Or are you one of the feuding, vengeful types?"

She spotted him working carefully around the rocks. The patter was just to lull her, if she were faking it. He was keeping shelter until he could get a real good look at her. Lunae added some protective coloration. Her mouth slowly opened, and a trickle of spittle drooled out. Consciously, she checked every muscle to make sure it was relaxed. She made no effort to watch what he was doing, relying on her ears to place him.

It worked. He came from behind his cover and stood beside where she lay. He wedged the toe of his boot beneath her to turn her over. He pushed.

As her body rolled, her bound arm snapped out and grabbed his ankle. She yanked. Standing on one foot and burdened with his blowpipe and sword, he toppled. Her dagger caught him in the arm. It wrenched from her grasp. Grasping for anything that could be a weapon, she caught his blowpipe. She clubbed him with it. The slender tube snapped in two, but he slumped out.

She stood. He was crumpled and bleeding from the knife wound, unconscious on the ground. His torch flickered erratically where it had fallen on the stone floor.

Lunae labored light-headedly for breath. A familiar buzzing sounded behind her ears. The tourniquet must have slipped a little in the battle. Another twist on the dagger's handle tightened the force on the arm band painfully. She would have to let it go soon or risk

damage to the arm.

The torch flared yellow when she picked it up. There were two doors, and she blocked them both. This chamber was slightly smaller than the other, but it too had a spring. Again, there was a small but comfortable-looking hiding place.

Sprawled on the ground, Lunae had the opportunity to see how large her thief really was; and he was big. She stared at the oozing wound for a moment before tearing a strip from his shirt and placing a pressure bandage over the wound. He was



still alive and too dangerous to leave alone. She sought one of his darts from the broken blowpipe and stabbed him in the arm with it. Tying him up would be best, but... it was getting... very difficult to move. Waves roared in her ears.

She slumped down and prepared to sleep it off. The dagger slipped a turn or two, loosening the band. Her arm and hand were an unhealthy blue.

Horror struck as she saw his eyes open, watching her. She tried to tighten the band and to get to her feet, but her legs wouldn't move. Slowly, he pulled himself up on his hands and feet and crawled towards her. She forced one knee up. Her leg was a lead weight.

"Sorry." His words came slowly. He was weak. "Immune to my own venom."

She was trapped by her own weight. One arm was paralyzed; one held desperately to the tourniquet. She couldn't get up.

He came relentlessly on. "Should have killed me. I should... have killed you." His hand reached hers and forced the tourniquet loose. "Both... too civilized... for this game."

YOU HAVE BEEN RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS
BY A POISON DART.
YOU ARE LOGGED OFF CATACOMB FOR
01:30 MINIMUM.
YOUR ACCOUNT BALANCE IS:
\$ 2.21 FOR TODAY
\$ 13.83 FOR THE GAME
\$??? TREASURE BONUS
(RESERVED) (CONDITIONAL = 53)

Judith stared at the screen. It was almost midnight, and the house was silent and dark, except for those glowing green letters on her screen.

Defeated twice in one day! This was supposed to be entertainment? She was feeling depressed.

Another hour and a half. Could she manage to stay awake long enough to log back on then? It was her only chance to turn the tables. Tomorrow would be a busy day with no time for this.

The treasure bonus puzzled her. <RUN 53>

CATEGORY 53 TREASURES ARE GENERALLY
MAGICAL IN NATURE AND ARE WORTHLESS
UNLESS PROPERLY USED. THEY CANNOT BE
SOLD TO THE WIZARD OF THE GATE,
SINCE HE WOULD TAKE THEM WITHOUT PAYING
FOR THEM. THE VALUE SHOWN IS ONLY AN
ESTIMATE OF THE TRADE VALUE OF THE ITEM.

Strange. There is no value shown. What does that mean? Is it the arm band? If so, I should have seen that message before.

Judith tapped a key that disconnected her terminal with the tieline. Then <RESPOOL, \$1800-2000> Back across the screen scrolled everything she'd seen or done on the screen between six and eight that evening.

There it is! I must have missed it trying to get down to supper. It has to be the arm band.

With that resolved, she put on her muffs, plugged them into the terminal, and keyed a wake-up.

LUNAE WOKE TO YELLOW LIGHT AND the smell of bacon and fresh trail bread. As she tried to lift her head, her whole body shook from hunger, fatigue, and the residual effects of the drug.

"Ah, good. I was hoping you wouldn't be out very long. Here." Her thief handed her a trail sandwich. She had no heart to protest. It vanished quickly.

The thief was even bigger than she remembered, now that she was on the ground and he was standing.

"Not too bad looking," he commented, echoing her own thoughts, "even with some very sharp looking teeth." He sat down on a rock next to her and handed her a bottle. While she made its contents vanish as well, he rambled on, "Of course, in this world, all you see are beautiful specimens or characters who like to make themselves deliberately horrifying. But most opt for beauty and strength, when they have any choice in the matter."

Lunae handed him the bottle. <SAY: "THERE WAS SAND IN THE BOTTOM. BUT THANKS. I LOST MY SUPPLIES." >

"I noticed that." He took her bottle and put it back among his things, even turning his back on her. By reflex, she reached for her knives and found them properly sheathed. He turned back to her. "I knew you would be out for a while — what with two doses of the dart in one day — so I tried to find your supplies. The sword was close, but all bent up. I backtracked to the Blue Chamber and saw your stuff. Frankly, from what I saw, I am very surprised you are still here. What got after you?"

<SAY: "A TOR BEAST.", TRY TO SIT UP AGAIN.> She made it this time.

He saw her effort and offered her a hand to a more comfortable seat on a water-smoothed boulder. "Maybe it's a good thing I didn't kill you. It might be handy to know someone who can survive a Tor beast attack. How'd you do it?"

<SAY: "I KILLED IT." >

"That, I don't believe. But tell me the tale anyway. You wouldn't believe how lonely this job is."

And so she did. The whole thing. Maybe Lunae wouldn't have divulged everything without taking some advantage in trade, but it was late at night and Judith was a bit lonely herself. Her thief made an appreciative audience, commenting appropriately during the telling.

<SAY: "AND I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR NOT KILLING ME, TWICE." >

"You did the same for me. I didn't come to until you were halfway through with the bandaging. I appreciate it. Surviving another day here pays the grocery bill off-line."

<SAY: "YOU MEAN YOU REALLY MAKE A LIVING AT THIS?" >

"This life of crime, you mean?"

<SAY: "WELL, YES." >

"You have it in a nutshell: I *live* on-line. What I make from CATACOMB has to be enough to pay for my bread and access charges, or I go hungry. Thievery is just a matter of the odds. I tried searching for treasure in every cubbyhole, but it turned out that I made more by surviving attacks from other characters and pocketing their findings than I could make on my own. When I bought the blowpipe and turned thief professionally, it even had some moral advantages. My victims usually survived. I'm really quite good at it. Rumor back at the Gate has it that the Phantom Thief is a native of CATACOMB and can't ever be caught or killed."

<SAY: "I STILL DON'T KNOW WHETHER I COULD BE A THIEF, EVEN AS AN ON-LINE CHARACTER.">

"Didn't you say you were an assassin?"

<SAY: "YES, BUT">

"Yes, but what?"

<SAY: "I DON'T KNOW. YOU'VE GOT ME CONFUSED= LET'S GO BACK TO TALKING ABOUT YOUR SINS. WHY CAN'T YOU WORK FOR A LIVING OFF-LINE?">

For a moment there was no response. Then, "Don't laugh, but there is a very good reason. Denver's child wage laws keep employers from hiring people of my age. Next year I'll be nineteen, and I won't have that excuse. You'll have to wait until then to tell whether I'm a sociopath or just a bright kid beating the system."

<SAY: "FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I'M SEVENTEEN, AND I DON'T THINK AUSTIN HAS THAT KIND OF LAW. BUT WHY ARE YOU HAVING TO MAKE A LIVING? I'LL STILL BE IN SCHOOL AT YOUR AGE.">

"That, my sweet, is the fate of everyone who's unlucky enough to be missing a set of parents and too cantankerous to abide by the whims of the state juvenile system. As long as I'm not arrested for an off-line crime, the people here will let me make my own way. And to tell the truth, if I must be a thief, I'd much rather be one in a world like CATACOMB, where such behavior is expected.

"And now for your sins. What is a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?"

Judith told her whole plan. She spoke of her goals of making enough money to attend the music camp and to win a first-chair position. By taking her out of the public-school system and away from her friends and by putting her in the academy, she wanted to show her parents that they would be depriving her of her true vocation.

"Whew! Angel, you make me feel old. I'm not going to discourage you by telling you what I think of your chances, but I must say I have every respect for your ambitions. If I had a spare \$300, I'd share it with you. But . . ."

The dollar sign on the screen triggered a memory, and for a moment Lunae considered how to get the arm band back from her thief and how to learn its secrets. Then Judith spilled the beans. She filled him in on the unusual logoff message she'd received, even replaying it and the condition code description back

from her terminal's local memory. Afterward, she explained her theory about the arm band.

"Angel, this is *not* how you're supposed to play this game. I'm supposed to kill you; you're supposed to kill me; and we're both supposed to steal each other's treasures."

<SAY: "AS GHOSTS, I SUPPOSE?">

"I wouldn't put it past us, in this world.

"In any case, you've hit me with a problem. If your theory about the Tor teleportation magic and the arm band is correct, then I am just the person to make the best use of it. I've used many of the magic spells of this world, and I know how they work. After all, that's how I spotted your last attack. Also, I've been all over the catacombs, and I know where there are several treasures only a teleporter could get at. So, I should cut your heart out, steal your artifact, and go to it. Instead, I'll have to trade you for it. All I've got is a busted blowpipe and treasure worth about fifty dollars in real money."

Judith thought about it for a moment. The Lunae in her clamored for a better deal, a percentage of the take. But as it was past four in the morning, CATACOMB seemed far less real to her than a nice boy beating the system in Denver.

<SAY: "THROW IN A GOOD SAFE ROUTE BACK TO THE GATE AND IT'S A DEAL. I'VE BEEN LOST IN THIS MAZE FOR THREE DAYS NOW.">

THE DAY WAS AN ORDEAL BECAUSE

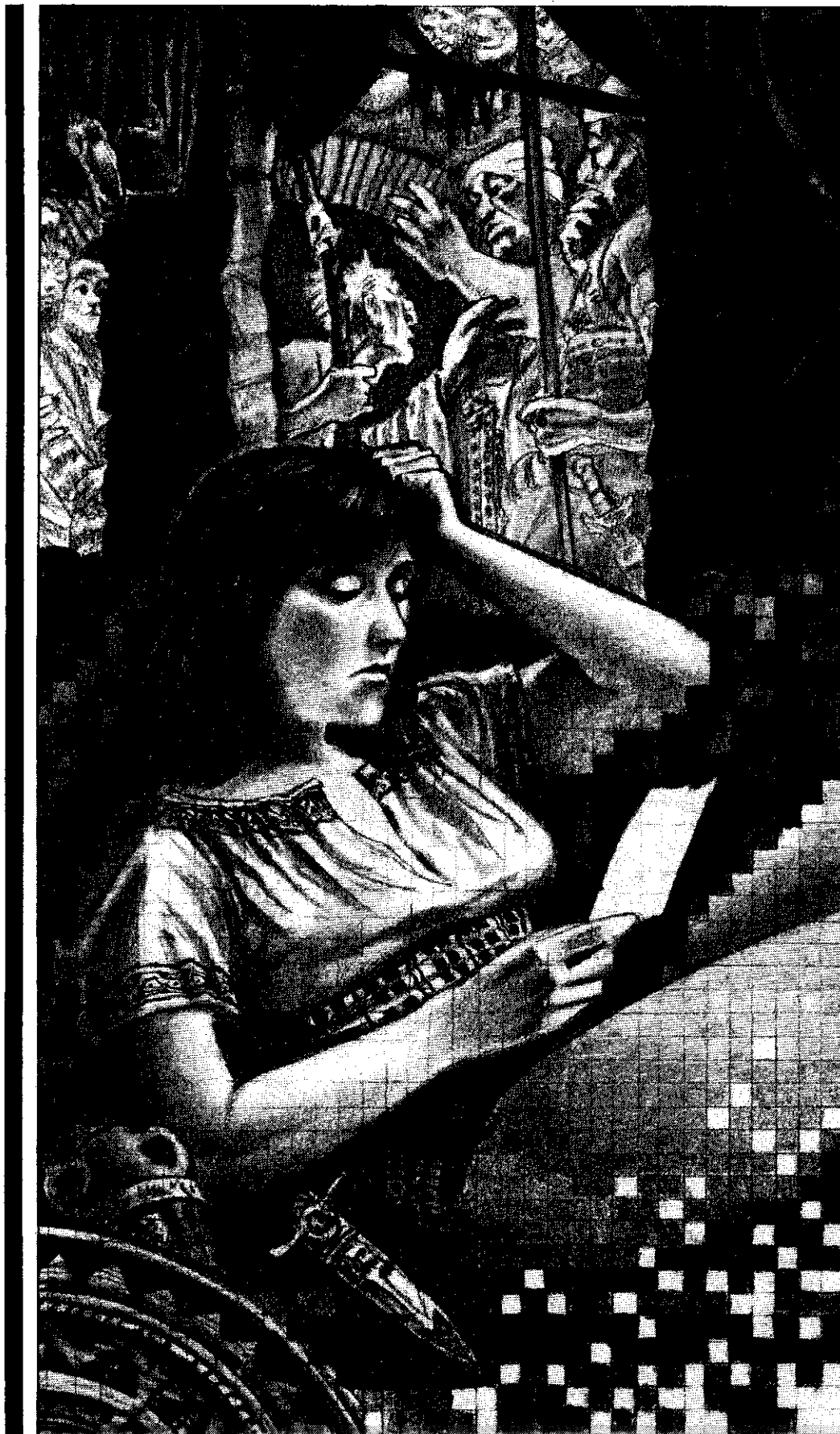
Judith never went to sleep, even after her thief shooed her off into a safety chamber and, thus, back into the off-line world. She could barely drag herself through her chores. And Barry was no help at all. Deprived of his COMMANDER game, his second-best sport was sister-baiting. She was grateful when Mother forced him out into the garden at spadepoint. Therefore, Judith didn't mind at all that she was stuck with the job of making sure that Georgie didn't get into anything but harmless trouble.

The day passed, but she never got logged back onto CATACOMB. Alone, finally, after the evening meal, she fell asleep.

Morning brought a tempest; Barry rushed out of the house with Jay, and a call to Jay's mother brought the information that the pair had gone off to the mall to play COMMANDER. The news of Barry's rebellion brought Father down from his office and put him into a black mood. He picked up the cane he always used for walking in public, drafted Judith to be his scout, and left for the mall with her.

Judith thought her father looked very impressive, especially so when he was angry. Though he limped and carried a cane in public, his image was of a man in control. Walking beside him through the crowd, her Lunae perspective made her wonder just how handy a club his cane would make. She headed for the arcade.

Barry was there, joking with some friends around a COMMANDER booth. The place was packed, mostly with boys Barry's age and older. Today, they seemed much less threatening to her. In an uncharacteristic



burst of sympathy, she didn't report his location immediately to Father.

"Hello, Barry."

He was surprised to see her. "Hello, Sis."

"There's a man with a cane outside who has brought a message for you."

"Oh" His face paled a bit, but the light was low. "Jay, I've gotta go. See ya." And he was gone. His friends looked puzzled. Judith smiled sweetly and explained, "Business." Then she walked off.

Halfway to the door she overheard: "... played CATACOMB like never before. The *Alien Worlds* column said he made a mint."

There was an empty CATACOMB booth. She slid into the seat and fed the machine a pair of coins.

LUNAE AWOKE IN a bed near the noisy babble of the throng at the Wizard's Gate. Her pillow was large, lumpy, and hard. Pinned to her sleeve was a note.

Dear Angel,

Sorry we didn't make this last connection. It worked. I've never had so much on-line fun since I started playing. Once I got to the right places, I found more gold in this world than I dreamed.

I've fulfilled my part of our bargain, though this Lunae of yours fights like a devil when you're not inside her. I had to drug her again to get her back to the Gate. The bed is only rented for a week, since I figure you'll connect up before then.

This may be the last time we talk. I have a strong feeling they'll lock me out of this world when I go cash in my coins.

Kisses for my Angel,
Your thief

Judith keyed the logoff.

YOU HAVE REACHED A SAFE PLACE.
YOU MAY NOW ADJUST YOUR ACCOUNT
BALANCES .
YOUR ACCOUNT BALANCE IS:
\$ 0=05 FOR TODAY
\$ 18.34 FOR THE GAME
\$ 534.25 TREASURE BONUS
DO YOU WISH TO CASH IN YOUR
TREASURE {Y/N}?
DO YOU WISH TO PAY YOUR GAME
ACCOUNT {Y/N}?

Oh, Thief! We only bargained for fifty. I don't even know your name. And you don't know mine.

Judith closed out her character and the game. Her bank account swelled nicely. *There it is — all the money I needed, and more. How come I feel like I just lost the game?* On the screen, her bank balance timed out and erased itself.

She sat back for a moment in the booth. *They're waiting for me. I'd better go.* Her fingertips lightly tapped the keyboard. Then, on impulse, she typed:

<\$USANET\$.ALIENWORLDS//>

The screen began scrolling the article.

ALIEN WORLDS BY OSRET CHUNER{1}

CATACOMB{2} HAS BECOME THE WORLD OF THE MOMENT SINCE YESTERDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT {3} ABOUT A DENVER PLAYER{4} WHO CASHED IN AT A REPORTED \$50,000. MANAGEMENT {5} OF CATACOMB, OF COURSE, MADE A BIG SPLASH OF IT, HOPING TO ATTRACT MORE PLAYERS. AND IT'S WORKING, IN SPITE OF MY WARNING

<RUN 4>

DENVER PLAYER CASHES IN BIG IN
CATACOMB.{1} {DENVER POST}{2}

EARLY THIS MORNING{3}, THE MANAGEMENT {4} OF CATACOMB HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE, AWARDING A CHECK FOR \$50,355.75 AND A SPECIAL EMERITUS RANKING{5} TO AN UNNAMED DENVER PLAYER{6} FOR HIS FEAT OF LITERALLY BURYING THE WIZARD'S GATE{1} UNDER SACKS OF GOLD AND JEWELS. IT WAS SAID BY PLAYERS

<RUN 6>

INTERVIEW WITH DENVER PLAYER

POST: I HEARD YOU MENTION THAT YOU HAD HELP FROM AN ANGEL IN YOUR AMAZING WIN. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO OTHER CATACOMB PLAYERS FOR INVOKING ANGELS?

PLAYER: SORRY- BUT TO GET THAT CHECK, I HAD TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT THAT I WOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE ABOUT CATACOMB.

POST: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO WITH YOUR WINNINGS?

PLAYER: I THINK I'LL MOVE TO TEXAS. I HEAR AUSTIN IS A NICE TOWN.

AT HOME, WITH BARRY IN THE GARDEN helping his mother, Judith again watched over Georgie. She played over in her mind all that her thief knew about her and all that she knew about him. Father, on the other hand, paced downstairs and never once went back up to his office.

Since he hovered around so long, Judith was finally prompted to say, "Daddy, don't worry so much about us kids. Barry wasn't being perverse. I noticed the expression on his face in the arcade when he realized his mistake. He was with his friends, and he just forgot about the gardening.

"As for me," she smiled, "I've been a pain about the new school. I'm sorry. I know it won't be as bad as I made it out to be. There will be plenty of new friends to make. And in fact, I can think of some advantages of being the only female flute player at Brentwood Academy."

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Ares™

SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION



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ON THE COVER

Talisman™ displays her sorcerous powers as others in Alpha Flight™ look on. For more on the newest (and oldest) members of Canada's greatest superforce, see the Marvel®-Phile by Jeff Grubb. Cover art by John Byrne.

Well, the editorial offices weren't deluged with responses for the "name that worst science-fiction game" contest. However, a few postcards popped in and gave a little insight into what makes a good idea for a game go bad.

Interestingly, several game systems named as the **worst** games were also called the **best** games by other readers. Tastes obviously differ from gamer to gamer on this topic. But what specific things were cited as making the difference? Two major complaints stood out:

1. Time-consuming and overly complicated game mechanics, particularly in combat and character generation systems; and,

2. Illogical, unscientific background and game mechanics that destroy any science-fiction flavor, making the game silly or heavily reminiscent of fantasy games.

Some distinction was made between board games and role-playing games, in that it might be okay for a role-playing game to have complicated rules, but the best board games should have fairly simple, straightforward rule systems. Even RPGs, however, should have an upper limit on complexity.

Everyone who entered the "name that turkey" contest is hereby congratulated, and the three winners should be receiving their prizes by mail shortly. Hopefully, you'll find the prizes enclosed to be on your personal "winner's list."

The Big Four of science-fiction gaming are represented in this issue of the ARES™ Section. Criminals, equipment, Canadian heroes, and the usual Q & A session appear here for your enjoyment. We're still taking requests and comments on the Marvel®-Phile for use in future columns. So far, Doctor Strange™, the Defenders™, and Rom™ are heavy favorites to appear before the year is out, in one form or another.

See you next month!

Roger E. Moore

ARES™ Section 97 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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ROGUES of the Galaxy

*An expanded TRAVELLER®
character class*

by Igor Greenwald

In a populated galaxy of isolated colonies and slow communication links, few dare to stake their lives on the fragile ships that ply the interstellar routes. For those who do, the risks are great, but so, too, are the profits — especially the illegal ones. This article presents one possible setup for adding the rogues of interstellar space to your TRAVELLER® game campaigns.

It's assumed that the interstellar

underworld is divided into two parts. The first consists of the upper crust of the underworld, that of the organized crime. Many crime syndicates secretly work under the auspices of megacorporations and even governments. In return for the semi-legal status they enjoy, those syndicates defend their patrons' interests in clandestine and often unscrupulous ways. Usually based on obscure planets in unimportant sys-

tems, organized crime is the backbone of the crime network that spans the Imperium and beyond.

Less organized and more adventurous are the so-called *frilancers* — individualistic smugglers who peddle news and contraband throughout the galaxy. Whether drinking it up at the starport bar or running guns to a restricted planet, frilancer rogues are among the most desperate, cunning, and dangerous people around.

Creating a Rogue

Enlistment: To be accepted into the underworld of interstellar rogues, a newly generated character must throw 6 + on 2d6 (DM + 1 if Social Standing 7-, DM + 2 if Endurance 8 +). The character's sex and race are irrelevant.

Branch determination: After enlisting, a character must roll 2d6 on the table below to establish his status in the interstellar crime network (DM + 1 if Strength 9 +).

die roll result

2-5	Solitary crime activity
6-9	Gang crime activity
10-12	Organized crime activity

Apprenticeship: The rogue character spends his first year as an apprentice to an experienced rogue. At the end of the year, he receives an automatic Streetwise skill and two rolls on the appropriate Branch Skills Table.

Terms of service: At the end of the first year, a character must begin serving a series of four-year terms. The first term is shortened to three years to compensate for the year of apprenticeship.

Areas of work: In the beginning of each term, a character determines the area of his work by rolling a 1d6. The three possible areas are Offworld (1-21, Onworld (3-4), and Prison (5-6; reroll for 1st term of service only). Offworld represents work involving space travel, while Onworld indicates the term will be spent on a planet's surface. The Prison assignment represents the character's arrest and detention for previous crimes committed.

Assignments: For each year of a four-year term, a character rolls on the Annual Assignments Table corresponding to his area of work. After determining the assignment, a character must roll on the appropriate Assignment Resolution Table for survival, promotion, connections, and skills. Special, Infiltration, and Job Education assignments do not require the usual assignment resolution, and are fully described at the end of the article.

Annual Assignments Table

die roll Offworld

2	Hijacking
3	Racketeering
4	Smuggling
5	Speculation
6	Racketeering
7	Infiltration
8	Smuggling
9	Speculation
10	Hijacking
11	Special
12	Special

Onworld

Robbery
Kidnapping
Larceny
Bookmaking
Kidnapping
Infiltration
Larceny
Bookmaking
Robbery
Special
Special

Prison

Mine labor
Factory labor
Detention camp
Cell confinement
Factory labor
Job education
Detention camp
Cell confinement
Mine labor
Special
Special

Offworld Assignment Resolution Table

	Hijacking	Racketeering	Smuggling	Speculation
Survival	6 +	5 +	5 +	4 +
Promotion	9 +	10 +	10 +	11 +
Connections	11 +	11 +	9 +	10 +
Skill	7 +	8 +	6 +	8 +

Onworld Assignment Resolution Table

	Robbery	Kidnapping	Larceny	Bookmaking
Survival	5 +	6 +	5 +	4 +
Promotion	10 +	20 +	11 +	11 +
Connections	11 +	11 +	10 +	9 +
Skill	7 +	6 +	6 +	7 +

Prison Assignment Resolution Table

	Mines	Factories	Camps	Cells
Survival	7 +	4 +	5 +	4 +
Promotion	—	12 +	11 +	
Connections	10 +	10 +	8 +	9 +
Skill	5 +	6 +	7 +	8 +

The following DMs apply to Offworld, Onworld, and Prison Assignment Resolution Tables alike:

Survival: DM + 1 if Endurance 9 + ;

DM + 1 if Intelligence 9 +

Promotion: DM + 1 if Dexterity 10 +

Connections: DM + 1 if Intelligence 9 +

Skill: DM + 1 if Education 8 +

Connections: Each time a character achieves a connections roll, he can roll on the appropriate table below, Connections signify familiarity with influential people in the indicated area. They do

not preclude bribes; rather, they make it easier to bribe the right people. The referee should determine the planet on which connections exist, as well as their exact application.

Promotions: Each time a character achieves the promotion roll, he advances one rank on the rogue ranks table, given below.

Rogue rank	TRAVELLER rank
Apprentice	1
Petty crook	1
Criminal	2
	3
Rogue	
Boss	5

die roll

Offworld

Onworld

Prison

1

Belt mines

Casino

Inmates

Minor colony

Inmates

3

Merchants

Inmates

Merchants

5

Police

Guards

6

Warden

Reenlistment: If he wishes, a character can automatically reenlist at the end of a term of service. No reenlistment roll is required. Likewise, a character may muster out at the end of any four-year term of service.

Benefits: A character gets a combined number of rolls on cash and possessions tables equivalent to the number

of terms spent in the service. Someone who has been a rogue for five terms (20 years) will receive five rolls, to be distributed as desired between the cash and possessions tables (eg., two cash rolls and three possessions rolls).

Survival: If a character fails the survival roll, he must then roll on the Discharge Table. He must roll for bene-

fits and leave the service immediately if he survives.

Skills: Each time a character achieves a skill roll, he is eligible to receive a skill. A roll can be made on either the Branch Skills Table corresponding to the character's branch or the Areas of Work Skills Table corresponding to the character's area of work.

Branch Skills Table

die roll	Solitary crime	Gang crime	Organized crime
1	Urban survival	Blade combat	Gun combat
2	+ 1 Endurance	+ 1 Dexterity	+ 1 Intelligence
3	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle
4	Computer	Carousing	Instruction
5	+ 1 Dexterity	+ 1 Strength	+ 1 Education
6	Brawling	Leader	Interrogation

Areas of work Skills Table

die roll	Offworld	Onworld	Prison
1	Ship's boat	Gambling	Bribery
2	Vacc suit	Carousing	Blade combat
3	Gunnery	Forgery	+ 1 Endurance
4	Mechanical	Gun combat	Brawling
5	Engineering	Recruiting	Streetwise
6	Navigation	Disguise	Prospecting
7	Pilot	Stealth	Concealment
8	Admin	Leader	Jack-o-T

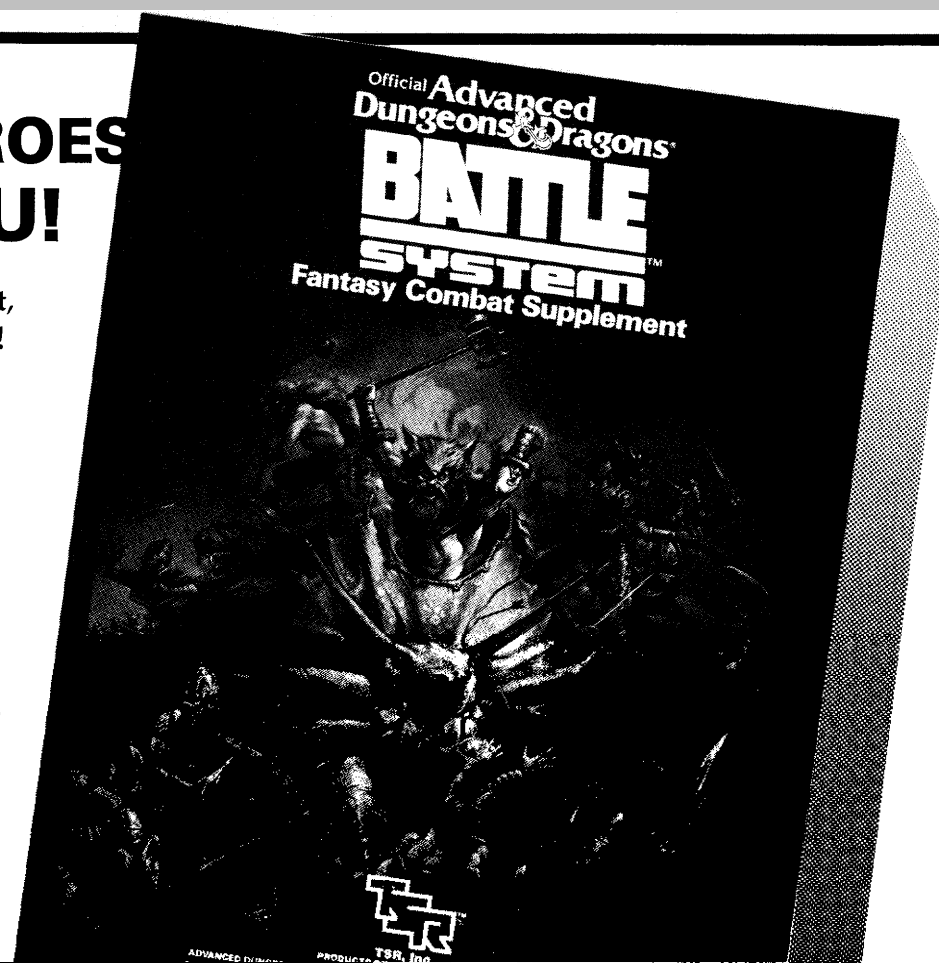
DM + 1 if rank 4+; DM +1 if on term 5+.

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Special assignments

Infiltration: Individual is assigned to infiltrate a firm or organization so that he can relay the information obtained back to the underworld. Promotion and survival are automatic. No connections may be earned. On a throw of 7+, a Surveillance skill is achieved.

Job education: Individual has been selected to participate in a work-release program outside of prison. On a roll of 5+ on 1d6, he may receive Electronics, Mechanics, Gravities, Computer, or Engineering skills (roll once for each skill). Upon completion of job education, an individual is paroled and may resume a shortened term of service either Onworld or Offworld.

Special in prison: Individual has been approached by prison officials with a request to cooperate in an investigation. If he agrees to report regularly on fellow inmates, he receives a Surveillance skill and is released at the end of the year, but he may not work the following year because of the suspiciousness of other rogues. If an individual refuses, he is sent to mine labor, with a DM -1 to his next survival roll.

Special: If a special assignment is achieved on the Assignment Table, an individual must roll on the Special Assignments Table given below.

die roll assignment

1	Assassination
2	Cross-training (pirates)
3	Arson
4	Computerized heist
5	Bodyguard duty
6	Branch transfer

Assassination: Individual participates in an assassination attempt. Roll 3 + on 1d6 to receive Stealth, Reconnaissance, and Gun Combat (one roll per skill).

Cross-training (pirates): Individual serves a year of service as a pirate. After completing his term of service as a rogue, the character may attempt to enlist into the Pirate service (see TRAVELLER Supplement 4).

Arson: Individual spends the year destroying property for insurance money. Roll 5+ on 1d6 to receive Demolition, Pyrotechnics, and Liason (one roll per skill).

Computerized heist: Individual has participated in a computerized heist and receives a Computer skill.

Bodyguard duty: Individual has served as a bodyguard for an important criminal figure. Roll 4+ on 1d6 for each: Gun combat, Brawling, and Vehicle (one roll per skill).

Branch transfer: Individual has been accepted into an organized crime syndicate. He receives one roll on the Branch Skills Table and a promotion. If the individual is already a member of organized crime, he is assumed to be teaching newly inducted members and receives an Instruction skill.

Discharge Table

If a character fails a survival roll, he must roll on the discharge table to determine the exact circumstances and consequences of his discharge (roll 1d6).

die roll result

1	Death (murdered or killed by police)
2	Trial testimony against a rogue; loss of all benefits and connections
3	Hunted by assassins; loss of two benefit rolls
4	Under close police surveillance; loss of all connections
5	Publicly exposed as a criminal; social standing -2
6	Clean start; transfer to any nonmilitary "legal" service for one more term

Benefits Table

Benefits represent the total amount of cash and property that a character accumulates during his career as a rogue. The total number of rolls equals the number of terms spent in the service.

die roll	cash	possessions
1	CR 500	Blade
2	CR 1000	High passage
3	CR 5000	Lockpick set
4	CR 10,000	Gun
5	CR 50,000	Forgery kit
6	CR 80,000	Travellers'
7	CR 100,000	Starship

Individuals with Gambling skill take DM + 1 on rolls for cash benefits. Individuals of TRAVELLER rank 4 + take a DM + 1 on rolls for possessions. All of the above material benefits are explained in TRAVELLER Book 1, *Characters and Combat*, or Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*. The Starship benefit gives the character possession of a 100-ton starship, similar to a scout or seeker ship (though variations are possible). The starship may or may not have been stolen.

New skills

The skills listed below appear in this article but are not listed in previous

GDW TRAVELLER publications. Disguise and Surveillance skills were first mentioned in Paranoia Press publications for the TRAVELLER game.

Concealment represents the ability to conceal items during searches, security checks, etc. While the base chance of success varies according to the intensity of the search, it is modified by + 1 for each level of concealment skill. Concealment skill also improves the chances to locate items during a search if the person searching possesses the skill.

Disguise allows an individual to change his outward appearance to conceal that person's identity. Use of a disguise kit is required. The disguise kit is significantly different from a regular make-up kit; it costs CR 1500 and is illegal on planets with law levels of 10 + .

Pyrotechnics denotes the ability to handle flammable fuels, chemically ignited rockets, and firethrowers. Use of this skill assists in the setting, as well as in the extinguishing of, fires.

Stealth represents the ability to move and act quietly, without attracting unwanted attention. It also allows the character to perform many maneuvers requiring high dexterity, such as climbing vertical surfaces or walking across narrow ones.

One of the many applications of Stealth is pickpocketing. Roll 2d6. On a roll of 2-6, the attempt fails and the victim notices the attempt; on a roll of 7-9, the attempt fails without anyone noticing it; on a roll of 10-12, the attempt succeeds. DM + 1 per level of Stealth skill.

Surveillance allows a character to observe someone's actions at great length without notice, and it allows an individual to notice if he is being observed. In the case where both the observer and the observed possess this skill, the one with the higher skill level achieves the desired effect.

Urban survival is the ability to survive for a limited time in a large metropolis, living off garbage dumps, gutters, and other unsavory food sources. This skill may only be used in truly desperate situations, as the person using it will lose an Endurance point for every three days the skill is in use. The damage is not permanent, but after all Endurance points are exhausted, the individual loses consciousness and has 2d6 hours to receive proper medical care before death occurs.

Special thanks to Omar S. Hopkins and Roger E. Moore for their helpful suggestions and comments on this article.

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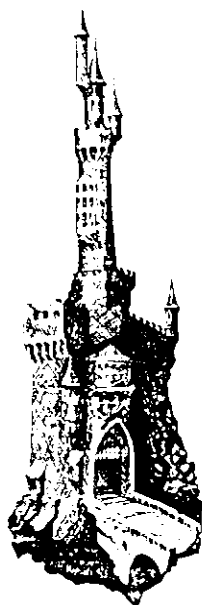
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StarQuestions

Answers and advice on the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Penny Petticord

If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: Is it necessary to have some level of "weapon skills" to use a weapon?

A: No. Characters without weapons skills simply use the basic chance to hit ($\frac{1}{2}$ the DEX score, rounded up) to resolve combat with a ranged weapon; and, $\frac{1}{2}$ STR or $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX is used for combat with melee weapons.

Q: Wouldn't an automatic rifle fire more shots than an automatic pistol would in a burst, since rifles are bigger?

A: No. The basic designs of the two weapons are very similar, giving them nearly identical mechanical characteristics (such as ammo capacity and rate of fire). The main difference is that the rifle has a longer barrel, which gives it the advantage of greater range.

Q: Couldn't a bullet belt be used instead of a clip on an automatic rifle? For example, a bullet belt for a rifle could have 100 rounds, a mass of 3 kg, and a cost of 30 credits. The weapon could then fire 20 shots in a burst, or 6 shots per round.

A: The standard automatic rifles sold throughout the frontier are not designed to accommodate belt ammo. A weapon such as you suggest could be custom-made, but it would be cumbersome enough to require a tripod mount for proper firing, just like a small machine gun.

Q: The rule book states that a Dralasite may fire two weapons. But later it says that firing two weapons will give the character a -10 modifier to hit. Is this true with Dralasites? If a Dralasite can fire two weapons, should he be able to fire a weapon that needs mounting?

A: Dralasites are able to fire two weapons at once with the -10 modifier, as any other character can. They can also handle two-handed or

mounted weapons normally. (In fact, a Dralasite with 3 "arms" might conceivably have an easier time handling a mounted, belt-fed weapon than a two-armed character.)

Q: Dralasites are able to make their body parts one centimeter in diameter. Should they be able to "ooze" under a wall that has a hole under it, or through holes in a fence?

A: The minimum diameter for a Dralasite's body is that of a limb: 10 cm. A Dralasite can conceivably flatten its entire body to a cylinder of that thickness, but it could become no thinner lest its internal organs should be crushed. Although it can extrude 1-cm-diameter "fingers," it cannot compress its whole body to that extent.

Q: How could I make an encounter involving pulsars, black holes, a supernova, or a magnetic nebula?

A: So far, those major spacefaring dangers haven't been defined in the game system or its accessories. When you want to build an adventure around a concept outside the scope of the current rules system, you must design it from the ground up, using the rules and known facts as a framework on which to build. Start by doing some research at your local library on the known scientific attributes of such space anomalies. This will give you the realistic basis for your scenario. Then, using your understanding of the STAR FRONTIERS game mechanics, convert the attributes to usable game terms. (It is not necessary for the final design to be 100% realistic to be playable.) Be sure to keep any new design elements in balance with the rest of the game system and your existing campaign.

Q: How many rockets can a rocket battery hold? How many seekers can a seeker rack hold? How many torpedos can a torpedo launcher carry?

A: A standard rocket battery holds 24 rockets. Seeker racks and torpedo launchers are merely devices for

firing, not storage containers. There is no set limit to the number of seeker missiles or torpedos you can carry, except the capacity of your ship.

Q: Can anything else besides a mine layer carry, seekers for mines?

A: Seekers can be carried and deployed by minelayers, heavy cruisers, and battleships, but only minelayers can carry mines.

Q: How often are new star systems charted?

A: Most of the Frontier remains uncharted. Beyond the information on known space given in the set and modules, the referee is responsible for developing additional portions of the universe for campaign use. Future modules and supplements may feature an occasional new charted system, but making up your own planets, systems, and creatures is part of the fun, because your players will never know exactly what to expect.

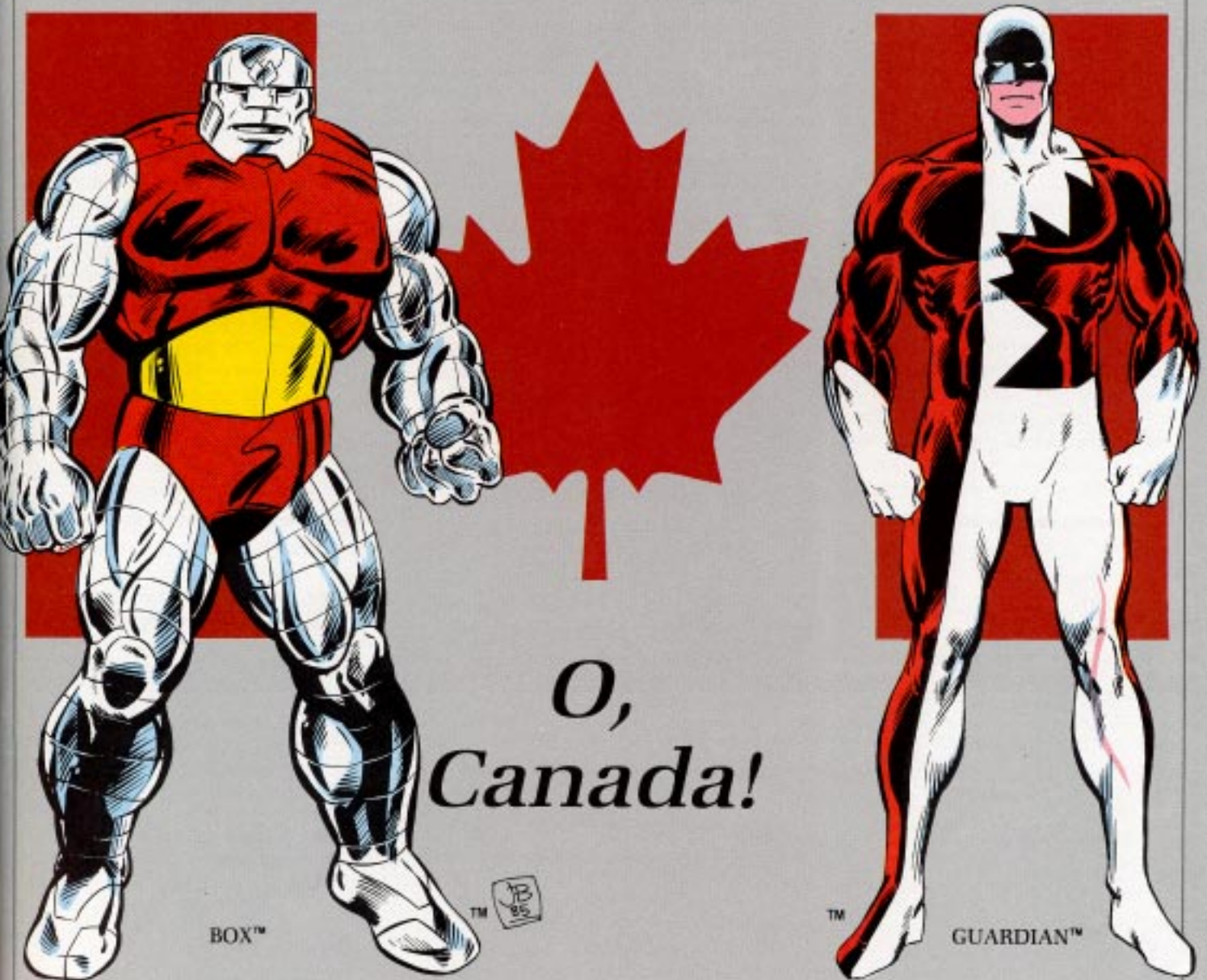
Q: Will the Sathar ever fight deep-space battles?

A: Sathar ships fight the good guys in space occasionally (see the Advanced Game scenarios in the Knight Hawks Tactical Operations Manual for examples). Face-to-face conflict with the worms is far more rare, though not completely unheard of. Sathar prefer to win their victories through subterfuge, sabotage, and infiltration, rather than direct combat, whenever it's possible.

Q: Is it possible to modify a starship with a hull size of 5 or greater to land in water? If not, why not?

A: Starships cannot land on planets at all; they dock at space stations to take on personnel and supplies. Only small ships and shuttles can land on planetary surfaces. Any airtight spacecraft that can land on the ground can drop into an ocean, but the spacecraft will immediately sink unless it has been made especially buoyant like a submarine.

The MARVEL®-Phile



by Jeff Grubb

One of the purposes of this column is to update the goings-on and memberships of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ groups we've done adventures for. We add new things, make corrections, and keep readers current with the ever-changing Marvel® Universe. Case in point: Alpha Flight™.

To say Alpha Flight is a group on the move is an understatement. In the 25 issues since its inception, the team has lost its government funding, its founder,

and its strongest member. It has also gained two new members on the team, neither one of whom was around when I wrote MH-5, *Cat's-Paw*, the Alpha Flight adventure. This article discusses the two newest members — and the fate of the oldest.

A correction that must be made involves a glaring error in the *Cat's-Paw* credits, where interior illustrations are credited to Jeff Butler. Now, there are Jeff Butler interiors in the module, but the drawings at the top of each chapter were penciled by none other than John

Byrne, artist/writer/creator of Alpha Flight, and inked by Jeff. This error slipped by everyone and was not noticed until the adventure was in print. Jeff Butler pointed it out to me, and my face went as red as the module's cover.

Therefore, a clarification: The interiors of MH-5, *Cat's-Paw* are by John Byrne, inked by Jeff Butler. My apologies to John, who also did the cover. We'll be watching the credit box more closely in the future.

Right. On to the new heroes of Canada (and one old one).

TALISMAN™

Elizabeth Twoyoungmen Archaeology student

Fighting: GOOD (10)
Agility: GOOD (10)
Strength: TYPICAL (6)
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)
Reason: GOOD (10)
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)
Psyche: EXCELLENT (20) (See below)

Health: 56
Karma: 50
Popularity: 5
Resources: TYPICAL

Known powers:

MAGIC: Elizabeth has magic powers that are very different from those of standard magic-wielders such as Shaman™ or Doctor Strange™. Elizabeth's power rank for magic is the same as the magic used within a 2-area radius around her. In a "normal" situation she has only Feeble Rank abilities, enough for a harmless

"light show" spell at most. In the presence of a master sorcerer or a mystical creature of great power, her abilities could increase to Unearthly or beyond.

In addition, she is immune to all forms of magical attack and is capable of reflecting such an attack back on the caster (FEAT roll to return). She can pierce mystic disguises at will and naturally detects even the weakest form of magery. She is relatively untrained at present, but she can cast mystic bolts and shields at the level of ambient magic. She is under the training of Snowbird™ and her father, Shaman.

Talents: Talisman™ is familiar with archaeology.

Talisman's story: Talisman is the daughter of Michael Twoyoungmen, now known as Shaman™ of Alpha Flight. When Elizabeth was a child, her mother died despite the best efforts of her physician father to save her. Elizabeth never forgave her father for the loss.

Estranged from her father, Elizabeth stayed with Heather McNeil's family for

the remainder of her youth. In college she studied archaeology, and it was on a dig of old Fort Calgary that her mystical powers first became known.

Elizabeth discovered a human skull imbued with the powers of one of the Elder Beasts, monstrous supernatural creatures who inhabited Canada before the coming of mankind. Her touching the skull broke down the barrier that kept the Elder Beast from entering this dimension. Despite her dislike for her father, she contacted him to seek his aid as Shaman — another indication of her power. Dr. Twoyoungmen had crafted a spell to conceal his identity, but Elizabeth easily and unwittingly penetrated his disguise. With the help of Shaman, Snowbird, and Puck™, Elizabeth defeated the Elder Beast and revealed her true power. She became the Talisman, a being foretold in ancient myth who would wield great powers.

Elizabeth has little training in formal magic as have other adepts such as Doctor Strange and her father. She is still learning to master her powers.

BOX™

Roger Bochs Inventor

[Statistics to the left are for Roger Rochs; those to the right are for Box™.]

Fighting: POOR (4)/REMARKABLE (30)
Agility: POOR (4)/REMARKABLE (30)
Strength: TYPICAL (6)/MONSTROUS (75)
Endurance: GOOD (10)/MONSTROUS (75)
Reason: EXCELLENT (20)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 24/210
Karma: 40
Resources: EXCELLENT
Popularity: 5

Known powers:

BODY ARMOR: Box's metal frame is made of "living metal," an invention of Roger Bochs's, and can withstand Amazing physical and energy damage. Only Mr. Jeffries™ (see below) can repair damage to Box.

FLIGHT: Box can fly at Excellent speed with normal agility. In addition, he can use his super-strong metallic muscles to leap up to 4 stories up and 2 areas away. His bootjets are useful as offensive weapons, inflicting Remarkable damage to a target in the same area with him.

MERGING: Unlike the previous Box,

Bochs is a integral part of his creation. He can "merge" with his living metal body in a single round, but he can take no other action that round. Damage to Box causes psychic trauma to Bochs (who feels no real pain) and catastrophic damage (loss of a limb) will cause unconsciousness (Red Endurance FEAT for Bochs to avoid). Finally, if Roger Bochs remains inside Box too long (make an hourly Endurance FEAT for Bochs after 3 hours), he will be trapped inside the creature, fused with the living metal.

HANDICAP: Roger Bochs has lost both legs above the knee and is normally confined to a motorized, three-wheeled wheelchair of his own design (Feeble Speed, Typical Body, Excellent Control). His company van (Bochs Electronics) is also a portable lab and modified to allow him both access into and the ability to drive the vehicle.

Talents: Roger Bochs is an extremely talented engineer and inventor. He gains an UP ONE shift in Reason when dealing with these areas.

Box's story: Roger Bochs is a paraplegic engineer and inventor who was recruited by James MacDonald Hudson (Guardian™) into Department H, the Canadian super-secret agent program. With MacDonald's skill at electronics giving life to Bochs's initial design and prototype, the pair built the first Box. This Box was similar to the present

version, save that it lacked flight capabilities and was controlled by a cybernetic link to the wheelchair-bound Bochs. As Box, Bochs rose from Gamma Flight™ and was a member of Beta Flight™ when Department H was closed down and the flights disbanded.

Bochs returned to his home in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, and went back to his designs. He was contacted soon after by Delphine Courtney, an agent for Jerry Jaxon. She attempted to recruit him into Omega Flight™, a criminal group set up to counter Hudson and his Alpha Flight. When Bochs resisted, Jaxon took the cybernetic controls of Box himself and led Omega Flight into battle. Box was destroyed in the battle, but only at the cost of Guardian's own life.

Following the defeat of Omega Flight, Bochs became greatly distressed at the damage caused by his creation. He was consumed with a desire for revenge on Courtney and Jaxon, who used Box to kill Guardian. To that end, Bochs recruited the services of a Mr. Jeffries, a former member of Gamma Flight. Jeffries is a natural transmutator, able to manipulate metal and tools into working machinery at a thought. With Jeffrey's help, Bochs forged a new Box from "living metal" of his own invention.

Box has joined Alpha Flight following the death of Sasquatch™ and the departure of Walter Langkowski from the team. His drive for vengeance is still active and strong.

GUARDIAN™

James MacDonald Hudson

(deceased)

Inventor

[Statistics to the left are for James Hudson; those to the right are for his Guardian™ suit.]

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: GOOD (10)/INCREDIBLE (40)
Strength: GOOD (10)/REMARKABLE (30)
Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)
Reason: INCREDIBLE (40)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: EXCELLENT (20)

Health: 60/110
Karma: 70
Resources: TYPICAL
Popularity: 4 (21 in Canada)

Known powers:

BODY ARMOR: All of Guardian's abilities derived from the super-powered suit he developed. This suit carried a portable force-field generator that acted as Amazing Body Armor against physical and energy attacks. This force was such that it diffused but did not absorb inertia from a blow, so Hudson could still be Slammed but not Stunned while the suit was functional.

FLIGHT: Guardian could fly at Incredible speed using his suit's electromagnetic projectors. His force field was kept on while he flew to prevent wind damage to him.

ENERGY BEAM: The suit could also fire beams of pure energy from its gloves, inflicting up to Incredible damage at a range of 10 areas.

TRANSPORT: Guardian's suit had an unusual special movement system. By manipulating gravitons, Hudson ceased to move with respect to the rotating Earth below. The sudden "stop" moved Guardian rapidly westward at over a thousand miles an hour at the equator; he could achieve lesser speeds as he approached the poles. The quickness of the change appeared to be identical to teleportation to the naked eye. Computers in the suit returned Guardian to normal movement, and prevented him from slamming into any mountains or trees.

Guardian's story: James MacDonald Hudson was the designer of a super-suit for the Ameri-can Company (a petro-chemical firm). The suit, built to bore into the earth for oil, used several new advances of Hudson's own design, including a psycho-cybernetic helmet that controlled the suit's actions. Hudson

was unaware that the U.S. military was the sponsor of the project until the Army came to claim his prototype, under the auspices of Jerome Jaxon, Hudson's supervisor.

Hudson, distressed that his ideas were used to militaristic ends, returned to his company that evening. He took the suit and destroyed the only available plans in Jaxon's possession. He then left the suit on a nearby hillside, taking the helmet with him.

Jobless and expecting quick arrest for his actions, Hudson was befriended by an Ameri-Can secretary named Heather McNeil, who convinced him to take his psycho-cybernetic helmet to the Canadian Government. The Prime Minister was intrigued by Hudson's talent and the possibilities of the suit. Pulling a few strings, the Prime Minister created Department H, an secret arm of the defense department, dedicated to research that would eventually band together the first Canadian super-powered heroes since the Second World War. Hudson became head of this operation, with Gary Cody as his official liaison. Hudson and Heather eloped, and the pair became the central core of Department H.

Department H experienced its ups and downs. Canada's first super-powered agent was Wolverine™, a short-tempered mutant who soon resigned to join the American X-Men™. Hudson pursued Wolverine into America in the first test of his battlesuit. Outgunned by the X-Men, Hudson, then called Weapon Alpha™, retreated in haste.

Over the next few months, Department H continued training super-powered agents. The super-teams were broken into three groups. Alpha Flight consisted of Hudson (then known as Vindicator™, and finally Guardian), Aurora™ and her twin brother Northstar™, Shaman, Snowbird, and Sasquatch. Beta Flight consisted of

Marrina™, Puck, Box, and Flashback™. Gamma Flight consisted of relative newcomers: Diamond Lil™, the savage Wild Child™, Smart Alec™, and the transmutator Jeffries.

After several missions, Department H was shut down following a change in government and increasing suspicion of super-powered beings. Alpha Flight, after defeating one of the Elder Beasts of the north, decided to remain together as a team, and their numbers were increased with the additions of Puck and Marrina .

Meanwhile, Jaxon, Hudson's former superior, had been fired from Ameri-Can for losing the suit's helmet, and had begun a long decline, both physically and financially that left him confined to a wheelchair. Jaxon recognized Guardian, leader of Canada's super-team, as Hudson, and set about to destroy the hero and his group and regain the secrets of the suit for Roxxon, his new employer. Jaxon collected some of the former members of Gamma and Beta Flights, and subtly increasing their anger at Hudson and Department H for dumping them, turned them into his tool of vengeance, Omega Flight. Jaxon lured Heather and James to a deathtrap in New York, but there Omega Flight was defeated by Alpha Flight. During the battle, Hudson's suit malfunctioned after he was badly beaten by Box. Unable to disconnect his suit in time, the leader of Alpha Flight was burned to death in the resulting explosion.


The remainder of Alpha Flight has carried on, having lost its founder and government support. Heather has taken the reigns as leader of the team, and several members have left and others joined. Recently, Heather believes she has seen James Hudson in a crowd. Whether it is Guardian returned from beyond, a delusion, or the start of some sinister plot remains to be seen.

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New Tools of the Trade

More artifacts for GAMMA WORLD® adventuring

by Peter Giannacopoulos

The nature of the GAMMA WORLD® game is such that new and different weapons of the Ancients are constantly being discovered by the multitude of adventurers on post-holocaust Earth. This article describes various devices of the Ancients that may appear alongside the many artifacts currently in use in game campaigns.

The artifacts are divided into the following categories: pistols, rifles, miscellaneous offensive devices, miscellaneous defensive devices, and other artifacts. These items are described below.

Pistols

This category includes hand-held firearms currently in use in modern-day society. For the sake of simplicity, these weapons (and the rifles) have been scaled down or otherwise altered for greater ease in game mechanics. The following are the statistics for contemporary weapons of war.

	Light Caliber	Medium Caliber	Heavy Caliber
Range	100 m	150 m	250 m
Bullet	lead slugs for all		
Rate	5	5	5
Damage	1-4	1-8	1-10
Code	DII	DII	DII
Cost	250	275	325
Kilo	.5	.5	1
Value	100	150	250
Clip	6-30	6-30	6-30
WC	9	10	11

Light caliber (.001-.200), medium caliber (.201-.400), and heavy caliber are designations of the guns' strengths. Light caliber includes pistols such as hand-held pellet guns. Medium caliber includes guns such as the .22 Baretta, the .357 swing-out revolver, the .22 revolver, etc. Heavy caliber consists of the .357 Magnum, the .44 Magnum,

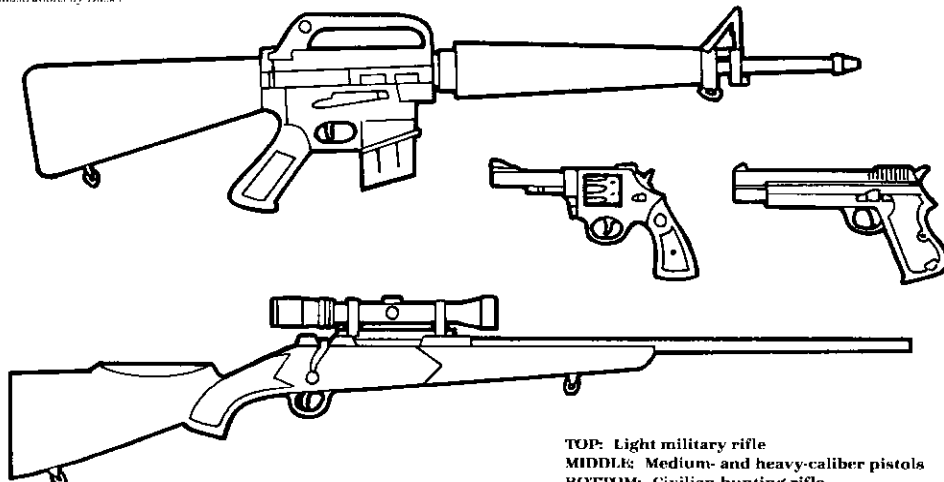
9mm Walther P-38, 9mm Walther PPK, and so forth.

Note that **rate** is the number of shots that can be fired in an Action Turn.

Clip refers to the number of shots that may be fired before the gun is emptied

Civilian rifles include .22 rifles and other light weapons. Light military rifles include the 9mm Uzi, .45 M-3, 5.56 NATO M-16, and 7.62 AKM. Heavy military weapons include all machine guns that must be mounted on a bipod or

Illustrations by Diesel



TOP: Light military rifle
MIDDLE: Medium- and heavy-caliber pistols
BOTTOM: Civilian hunting rifle

of all ammunition. **Damage** is the damage done per shot.

Rifles

Many projectile weapons were in use during the Shadow Years, for both recreational and military/law enforcement purposes. The larger shoulder arms are described below.

	Civilian Model	Light Military	Heavy Military
Range	200 m	250 m	600 m
Bullet	lead slugs for all		
Rate	3/turn	6/turn	10/turn
Damage	1-6	1-6	1-8
Code	EII	EII	EII
cost	400	500	700
Kilo	3-4	5-6	60
Value	350	750	1000
Clip	10	40	100
WC	10	11	12

tripod, such as the .50 M-2 Browning. Rate, clip, and damage are described above.

Other weapons

Many lethal powered weapons were used during the Shadow Years. One of these was the **disruptor rifle**, used by both government troops and terrorists for its sheer destructiveness. Its statistics are: weapon class 15; code EIII; range 65 meters; damage 12d6; not available for sale; weight 4 kilograms; Rank value.

Disruptor rifles run on two hydrogen energy cells, good for 4 shots. If a beam from one of these rifles hits an organic entity, it will cause 12d6 points of damage. Should this disruptor energy strike machinery, it will cause the machinery to malfunction unless the target fails a Mental Attack against an MS score of 15.

A non-intelligent machine, such as a weapon, vehicle, hydraulic lift, etc., is considered to have an MS of 1-4 for defensive purposes. Other items such as androids and cyborgs use the MS given to them by the referee or the rulebook.

These malfunctions can cause the affected machinery to shut down completely (90% chance) or react in a totally unexpected way (10% chance), such as by exploding or running backwards. This effect lasts either 2-24 Action Turns (80%) or permanently (20%). The only machinery not affected by this device are Powered Assault, Attack, and Scout Armors, which were constructed to negate this effect. Wearers of these armors are still subject to the 12d6 points of damage, however.

War bands achieved some measure of popularity among terrorist assassins during the Shadow Years. War bands would not show up on weapons scanners, were completely silent when used,

and use. When an incendiary grenade explodes, it releases searing chemicals which initially cause 11d6 points of damage. In addition to this damage, a spray of burning chemicals covers all in the 9-meter blast radius. These chemicals cause an additional 1-6 points of damage for 2-7 action turns, or until extinguished by immersing the flames in water, since these chemicals easily wash off.

The statistics for these grenades are: weapon class 8; code FIII; throwing range; 11d6 damage (plus 1d6 damage per Action Turn as noted above); cost 100 gold pieces; .2 kilograms weight; 500 Status Points value.

The **freeze ray** was a unique weapon developed at the end of the Shadow Years. It has these statistics: weapon class 14; code DIII; range 80 meters; damage 4d8 (plus special); costs 750 gold pieces; weight 3 kilograms; 650 Status Points value.

Defensive artifacts

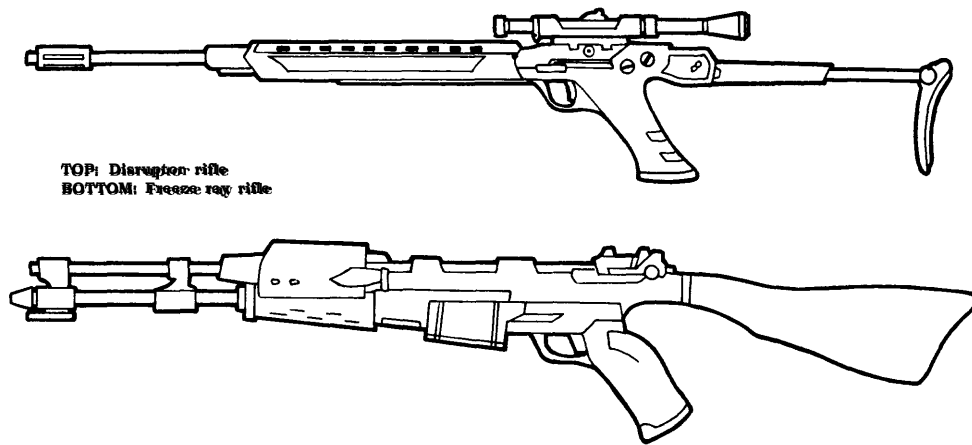
Portable force shields are localized force shields similar to the many types encountered throughout the post holocaust world. The shield has no effect on the user's AC but it gives the user a 50 point defense screen against all laser and blaster attacks, fusion beams, needlers, stun rays, energy maces, vibro blades & daggers, stun whips, and micro and mini-missiles, provided that the user knows from where the attack is coming. It does not give its defense value to any bomb, grenade or rear attacks. Gas attacks are not protected against, either. Portable force shields are code DIII, cost 550 gold pieces, weigh 1 kilogram, and have Rank value.

Neuro collars are code DIII and cannot be bought. They weigh .5 kilogram and are worth 1000 gold pieces. Neuro collars were containment devices used by law enforcement organizations throughout the pre-holocaust world as a means of containing hostile human beings. They are large duralloy collars with many studs imbedded in them. Along with these studs, each collar has two brightly colored buttons, one red and the other green. The red button activates the collar, and the green one shuts it off.

When the neuro collar is in use, it sets up a field in the wearer's nervous system which forces the wearer to obey the commands of the being who activated the device. The wearer becomes subject to the collar if he loses a Mental Attack against a MS of 18. The wearer will obey any order except those that are obviously self-destructive.

The neuro collar only has a 30% chance of affecting mutated plants or animals, since their nervous systems are so different from Pure Strain Humans. The artifact also has only a 80% chance of affecting mutated humanoids, since their nervous systems may also be different.

While in this subdued state, affected individuals are unable to use any conscious physical or mental mutations. They are also unable to act violently in any manner against anyone, even if ordered to do so. Note that affected individuals still possess all of their rational facilities, and they are still capable of independent thought and resentment against their "masters." The neuro collar operates on two hydrogen energy cells good for 20 hours of continual use. The wearer cannot turn off his own collar.



TOP: Disruption rifle
BOTTOM: Freeze ray rifle

and had deadly effectiveness. Their statistics are: weapon class 1; code AII; hand-to-hand range; cost 500 gold pieces; weight .1 kilogram; 525 Status Point value.

War bands are worn over one's fist much like brass knuckles. Physically, a war band appears to be 4"-square piece of duralloy, with a ringed handle for one's fingers mounted on the back. This device is powered by a hydrogen energy cell good for 25 hours of use.

War bands are used to bludgeon an opponent. When a punch is landed, the hydrogen energy cells multiply the user's strength. A hit causes 5d4 points of damage, with the attacker being able to attack twice per round if one war band is worn on each hand.

An **incendiary grenade** is similar to a chemex grenade in both appearance

The hydrogen energy cell that powers this device is good for 5 shots. When a hit is scored by this rifle, the atmospheric nitrogen around the target is suddenly solidified, instantly imprisoning the victim. Aside from the initial cold damage inflicted on the victim, the victim cannot breathe and will go unconscious in as many Action Turns as he has Constitution points, then will die in 3-18 Action Turns more.

A victim may break free of this ice prison if he rolls his Physical Strength or less on 3d6 + 3. If this roll succeeds, the victim may attack on the next Action Turn. If this roll fails, the victim will be trapped for 6-36 Action Turns, at which time the nitrogen will have disappeared back into the air. The freeze ray was in limited use only, being largely experimental in nature.

Other artifacts

The **military combat tank** was a standard army vehicle used frequently throughout the Shadow Years in large-scale battles. It was often pitted against other combat tanks or various military robots. A combat tank will be highly prized and will be heavily guarded. Most such tanks have armor class 1, 40 hit dice, control B, sensors B/C, power A/D, code GIII, a maximum speed of 175 kilometers per hour, and Rank value. Tanks will not be sold.

A combat tank is generally operated by a crew of three. One of the crew members drives the tank, one controls the main gun(s), and the third controls the other weapons systems.

Combat tanks look much like those in use in the twentieth century. The follow-

ing example describes one unusual combat tank, the Win Hammer, that has two main guns on the turret. Numerous small weapons mounts are spread over the Twin Hammer, containing an assortment of lethal weapons. The tank is made of duralloy and has small openings in the sides (covered by duralloy shutters) which contain steel-reinforced glass.

The two main guns each fire a laser bolt causing 10d6 points of damage; the main guns share the same target. Two batteries of micro-missile launchers (each with a clip of 35 missiles), four batteries of grenade launchers teach with 2-12 grenades of mixed types), two batteries of fusion rifles, and four batteries of stun guns complete this tank's armament.

The Twin Hammer's weapons statistics are summarized in the following chart:

type	number	damage	range
Laser cannons	2	10d6	250 m
Micro-missiles	8 (2)	7d6	500 m
Grenade launchers	16 (4)	varies	275 m
Fusion rifles	8 (2)	*	400 m
Stun guns	8 (2)	*	225 m

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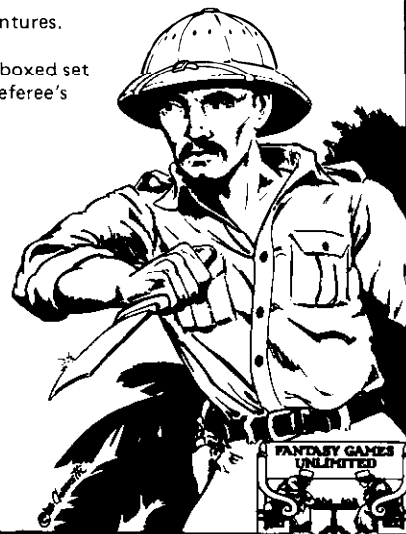
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type	number	damage	range
Laser cannons	2	10d6	250 m
Micro-missiles	8 (2)	7d6	500 m
Grenade launchers	16 (4)	varies	275 m
Fusion rifles	8 (2)	*	400 m
Stun guns	8 (2)	*	225 m

Number shows how many particular weapons are on the tank. The number in parentheses shows how many batteries of that weapon exist. As can be seen, there are four weapons per battery.

Damage is self-explanatory. An asterisk (*) indicates that the weapon has a special effect described in the GAMMA WORLD® rules. **Range** is also self-explanatory. Note that all weapons on a tank may be fired simultaneously.

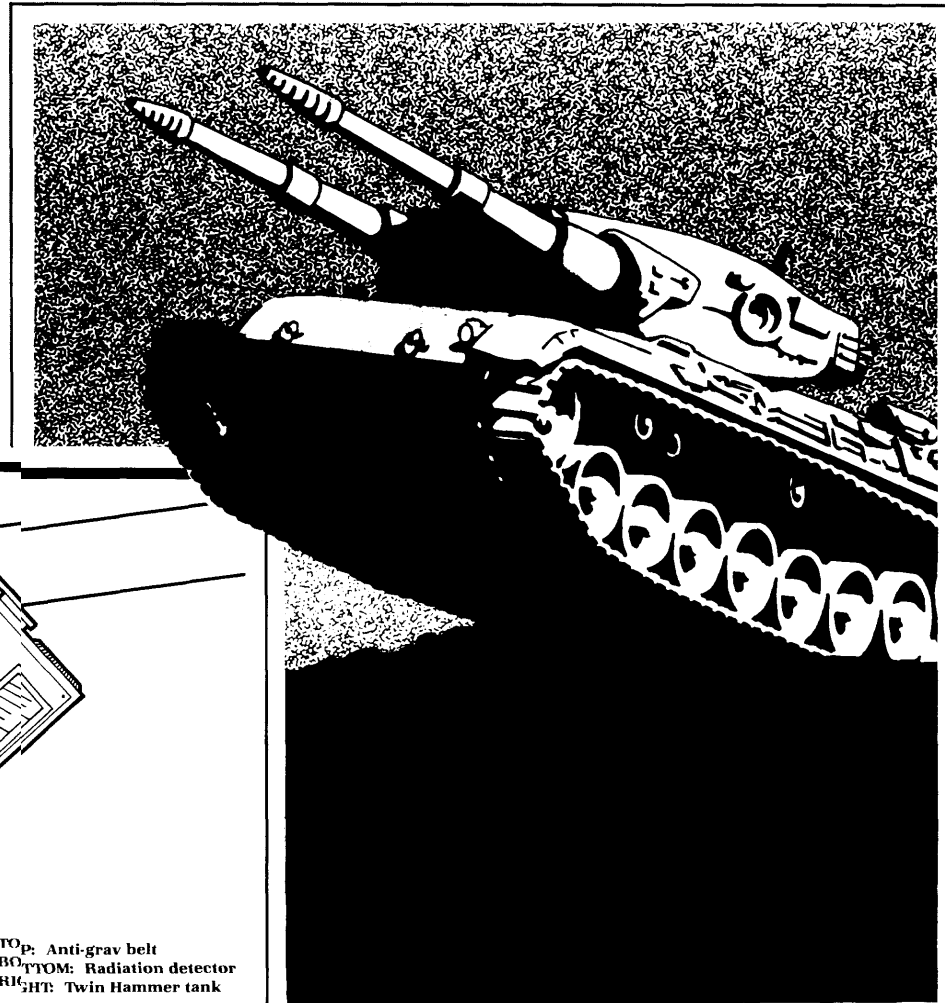
The laser cannons are mounted on a revolving turret and have a 360-degree

good for 24 hours of use. The belt is code BIII, costs 1250 gold pieces, weighs 2 kilograms (when turned off), and is worth 1000 Status Points.

The belt will fit most Pure Strain Humans and humanoids, unless they have some physical deformity such as *fat cell accumulation*. Whether or not

Finding these artifacts

Pistols and rifles can be found with certainty in any well-preserved city or town of the Ancients, having been used frequently by civilians before and during the Shadow Years for recreation,



TOP: Anti-grav belt
BOTTOM: Radiation detector
RIGHT: Twin Hammer tank

field of fire. The micro-missile battery is mounted on the top of the Twin Hammer's turret and may rotate 90 degrees to the left or right, having a 180-degree field of fire. (Note that the field of fire moves as the turret rotates.) One battery each of 4 grenade launchers is mounted on the front, rear, and sides of the tank, each with a 180-degree field of fire. The fusion and stun rifles are mounted on rotating platforms with 180-degree fields of fire at the front and rear of the tank.

The **anti-grav belt** resembles a 1-cm thick belt with an 18-cm square box on the back of the middle of the belt. On one end of the belt is an 8-cm rounded buckle on which are numerous buttons to control the ascent, descent, movement direction, activation, and deactivation of the anti-grav belt. The item is powered by 2 hydrogen energy cells

the belt will fit a mutated animal or plant is up to the referee. Note that any user must stay within the Earth's breathable atmosphere; the maximum altitude for a character without an air supply is 6 kilometers. The movement rate for the belt is 80/3600/80.

The **radiation detector** is a 30-cm long by 10-cm wide by 5-cm thick metal box which has a dial with 18 lines on it. When this item is taken out and activated, it will give a loud beeping sound when within 30 meters of a radioactive source. It will also show the radiation intensity, from 1 (harmless) to 18 (deadly). The device is powered by a hydrogen energy cell good for 72 hours of continuous use. This device is code EIII, costs 1250 gold pieces, weighs .5 kilograms, and is worth 750 Status Points.

defense, and display. Light and heavy rifles were used exclusively by the military or by terrorists.

Freeze rays, war bands, incendiary grenades, and force shields will only be found in well-preserved military bases or police headquarters. Disruptor rifles are found exclusively in near-perfect installations which are still under heavy guard by warbots, defense borgs, or numerous security robots. Neuro collars, radiation detectors, and anti-grav belts will be found in many installations, police HQs, military bases, and some residences. Combat tanks will only be found in major untouched military bases.

Artifacts mentioned above may appear in the hands of powerful NPCs or Cryptic Alliances. This is especially true of neuro collars, which are often used by slave lords to further their own ends.

Deities

(From page 9)

5% magic resistance, granting a + 1 on saving throws, directing the individual to some special magic item which can be won as treasure in return for overcoming some monster of opposing alignment.

Minor penalties: 1 hit point deducted from a hit die, minimum damage on one particular attack, a successful attack turned into a miss, being surprised when the character would not otherwise have been, having minor monsters continually harassing the character, getting minimal treasure instead of a reasonable amount, losing some minor magic item.

Major penalties: losing 1 hit point from each hit die, losing 1 point from a characteristic, making saving throws at -1, losing a major magic item, having a great monster dogging the character's footsteps, losing the ability to gain any substantial treasure of any sort.

Rewards should be given sparingly for particularly fine role-playing of alignment and "faith." Penalties are invoked for failure to properly role-play, for swerving in alignment, and for not adhering to the imagined "faith." Of course, for actual change in alignment, these penalties *plus* those stated in the DMG can be meted out as the DM sees fit, rather than merely following the DMG. It is fairly easy to keep

clerical types on the correct role path, for they must deal with deity-related matters daily. It becomes more difficult when non-clerical characters are concerned, but by explaining the importance of alignment to the players, and by stating that the deities are watching for losses in their power, then mentions of "foreboding," "ill luck," and "disfavor" should suffice to keep role-playing in mind.

As a final note, those monsters with less than 1 whole hit die should be treated as half-value with respect to the points they accrue to deities. Thus, kobolds and goblins, for instance, are worth 1/2000 point. No wonder they are considered as catapult fodder by everyone. . . .

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Convention Calendar

CONJURATION 2, May 10-12

This event will be held at the Camelot Hotel in Tulsa, Okla. Toastmaster will be Ed Bryant, and guest of honor will be Mike Resnick. For more details about this gaming convention, contact: ConJuration 2, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169, or telephone (918)438-3336.

MADNESS '85, May 11

Sponsored by the RECAP Truancy Prevention Program, this gaming convention will be held at Middletown High School in Middletown, N.Y. Registration fees are \$3. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Madness '85, 34 South Street, Middletown NY 10940.

ARCHON I, May 17-18

This science-fiction convention will be staged at Apollo High School. Admission fees are \$6 for two days and \$5 for one day. For more information, contact: Mike Fitzpatrick, 4964 W. Laurie Lane, Glendale AZ 85302, or telephone (602)931-4256 (evenings).

HAWAIICON '85, May 17-19

To be staged at the Pacific Beach Hotel in Waikiki, Hawaii, this convention will feature role-playing games, miniatures, seminars, and a dealers' area. For more information about the convention or about tailored travel arrangements, contact: HawaiiCon, Inc., P.O. Box 25445 Honolulu HI 96825.

TECHNICON II, May 18-19

This convention will be held in the Blacksburg Middle School in Blacksburg, Va. M.A. Foster will be the guest of honor. Featured events will include tournaments, video rooms, and much more. Club and student rates are available. For more details, contact: Technicon II, C-10 Brightwood Manor, Blacksburg VA 24069.

TALLY CON 4, May 24-26

This gaming convention will be held at the Hilton in Tallahassee, Fla. Guests of honor will be L. Sprague and Catherine Crook de Camp. Activities will include an art show and sale, panel discussions, a game room, and "filksinging." Registration fees are \$15. For more details, contact: The Grinning Gremlin, 824-C W. Tharpe St., Tallahassee FL 32303, or telephone (904)385-1518.

V-CON 13, May 24-26

This science-fiction convention has a theme which focuses on the bizarre, the

macabre, and the supernatural. Featured events will include role-playing and board games, an art show, and a dealers' room. Registration fees are \$18 (in Canadian funds only) until May 23, and \$20 at the door. For more details, contact: V-Con 13, P.O. Box 48478, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V7X 1A2.

DIPPYCON, May 25

This convention will take place in Wilkerson Hall at Chapman College in Orange, Cal. Events will be held from noon to 11 pm. For more details, contact: Dippycon, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

M.I.G.S. VI, May 26

Sponsored by the Military Interests and Games Society, this event will be held at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre in Cambridge, Ontario. Featured activities include wargaming tournaments and a painting competition. Registration fees are only \$1. For additional information, contact: George M. Bawdfen, 11 Veevers Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8K 5P6.

CAMPCON '85, June 1

To be staged at Camp Emmanuel, south of Astoria, Ill., this event will feature all popular role-playing and board games. Registration fees are \$1 in advance, and \$2 at the door. For more information, contact: Kevin B. Sager, P.O. Box 833, Astoria IL 61501, or telephone (309)329-2934.

DALLASCON '85, June 1-2

This convention is to be staged at the Regent Hotel in Dallas, Texas. All types of gaming events will be featured. Preregistration fees are \$12. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: DallasCon, 3304 Crater Lane, Plano TX 75023.

NORTHQUEST '85, June 1-2

To be held at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho, this convention will feature a variety of fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Northquest '85, P.O. Box 633, Boise ID 83701, or telephone (208)343-5627.

HATCON 3, June 6-7

To be held at the Ramada Inn, this convention will include a hat masquerade, a pool party, a champagne Sunday brunch, and various games. Guests of honor will be Ian and Betty Ballantine and Fred Haskell.

Registration fees are \$30 until June 1, and \$35 at the door. For additional information, contact: Kennedy Poyser, CT SF Society, 108 Park Ave., Danbury CT 06810, or telephone (203)743-1872.

SYCCON I, June 15

To take place at the Peach Tree Mall in Marysville, Cal., this convention will feature a variety of gaming events. Winners will receive \$50 worth of gaming merchandise and comic books. Though admission is free, there will be a \$1 registration fee for each event. Be aware that openings are limited. For more information, contact: Update Productions, c/o The Game Warden, 24 Peach Tree Mall, Marysville CA 95901.

GLATHRICON, June 14-16

To be held at the Sheraton Inn in Evansville, Ind., this event will feature a masquerade, seminars, tournaments, and an RPGA luncheon. Guest of honor will be Frank Mentzer, game designer and editor for TSR, Inc. Registration fees are \$8 until June 1, and \$10 thereafter. For more information, contact: R.C.S.F.A., P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737, or telephone (812)858-5419.

DESOLATION CON II, June 15

This convention will offer a variety of board and role-playing games. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Desolation Con II, P.O. Box 297, Richland WA 99352, or telephone Dale Painter at (509)586-3318.

MICHICON GAMEFEST '85 June 15-16

This convention will feature board and role-playing game tournaments, miniatures events, and seminars. For more details, contact: MichiCon Gamefest '85, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192.

POLYCON '85, June 21-23

To be held on the beautiful San Luis Obispo campus of California Polytechnic State University, this convention will feature an assortment of wargames, role-playing tournaments, miniatures events, and a costume contest. For more details, contact: Polycon '85, Box 168 Julian A. McPhee University Union, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

X-CON 9, June 21-23

This science-fiction convention will be staged at the Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc, Wis. Robert Bloch will be the guest of honor at the convention. Registration fees are \$12 until May 24, and \$17 thereafter. For more information, contact: X-Con Ltd., P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee WI 53201-0007.

GAMEX '95, July 5-7

This convention will take place at Chapman College in Orange, Cal. Contact: GAMEX '85, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

SEAGA '85, July 5-7

To be held at the Airport Ramada Inn in Atlanta, Ga., this gaming convention will feature computer gaming tournaments, door prizes, and movies. Dealer inquiries are welcomed. Admission fees are \$12 until June 15, and \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: SEAGA, Inc., K. Scott Filipek, P.O. Box 930031, Norcross GA 33093.

MINDCON II, July 13-14

This gaming convention will be held at the Scottish Rite Temple in San Antonio, Texas. A variety of role-playing tournaments, a costume contest, and movies will be among the featured events. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Craig Pierce, 7107 Blanco Road, San Antonio TX 78216, or telephone (512)349-6620.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST III, July 13-14

This convention will take place at Ambassador Hall at the University of Windsor. Fantasy, science-fiction, and miniatures tournaments will be featured. Preregistration fees are \$10 (in Canadian funds); registration fees are \$12. For details, in Canada, contact: WRPA Head Office, 584 Brighton, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N8N 2L6; or, in the U.S.: U.S. Office, 8675 Sarah Lane, Grosse Isle MI 48138.

SPACECON 8, July 19-21

To be held at the Stouffer's Concourse

Hotel in Arlington, Va., this convention will feature presentations by representatives of NASA and Universal Pictures. Guests of honor include Richard Herd and Frank Ashmore of "V," Robert Colbert of "Time Tunnel," and Angelique Pettyjohn of "Star Trek." Admission fees are \$15 until June 1, and \$20 thereafter. A Friday night banquet is planned; cost will be \$25. For details, contact: SpaceCon 8, 230 Denfield Drive, Alexandria VA 22309.

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY™ CONVENTION XIV, July 20

To be staged at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., this convention will feature an assortment of historic miniatures events, role-playing game tournaments, a painting contest, and a flea market. Preregistration fees are \$5.75; admission at the door is \$6.25. For more information, contact: R. Hagerty, 905 W. Franklyn Ave., Elkhart IN 46515, or telephone (219)293-4398.

THUNDERCON I, July 20-21

This gaming convention will be held at Hammarskjold High School in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Featured events include science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, board and war games, and miniatures events. Dealers' booths, a flea market, movies, and a figure painting content will also be provided. Registration is \$5 per day, or \$8 for the weekend. For more

details, contact: Thundercon, c/o The Gamer's Attic, 777 Red River Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada P7B 1J9, or telephone (807)345-2411.

ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR II, Aug. 2-4

This gaming convention will be held at the Omni Hotel & Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga. Leading guests will include authors Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, and Frederik Pohl, artist Jim Starlin, and special-effects creator Jim Danforth. Featured events include a costume contest, a short story competition, a graphic story contest, an amateur film festival, and an art show. Registration fees are \$21 until June 30 (with club and family discounts available), and \$28 thereafter. For more information, contact: Atlanta Fantasy Fair, P.O. Box 566, Marietta GA 30061, or telephone (404)425-8095.

GEN CON® 18 GAME CONVENTION, Aug. 22-25

To be staged at the MECCA Convention Hall in Milwaukee, Wis., information for this convention, including registration forms and prices, will be available in the May 1985 issue of DRAGON® Magazine.

AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS, Sep. 7

For more information about this convention, contact: Tim Wisner, 513 E. Maxwell St., Lexington KY 40502.

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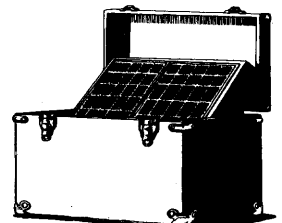
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Blueprint

(From page 48)

Have you remembered to include all of the elements you originally had in mind, and to allow room for adventuring elements that have yet to be detailed? Do your "international politics" leave room for lots of intrigue and an occasional war? In short, question *everything* you've decided and accomplished to make sure that it is done well and done completely.

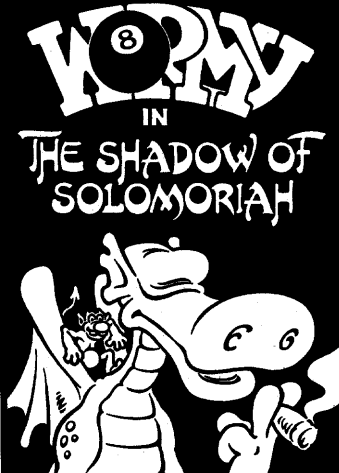
Let's face it, creating anything of quality takes effort and planning. Building a complete and entertaining AD&D campaign is no exception. This article provides some guidelines on how to get started on the framework of your campaign, but there are still a lot of colorful extras to be hung on that framework.

Table 1: Possible terrain features

Atoll	Lake, shallow
Barren	Marsh
Bay	Mountain, high
Canyon	Mountain, low
City	Mountain, volcanic
City, lakeport	Mud flats
City, riverport	Oasis
City, seaport	Ocean, deep
Crater	Ocean, shallow
Desert	Ocean, trench
Dunes	Pass
Escarpment	Path
Farmland	Plain
Ford	Plateau
Forest, deep	Rapids
Forest, elven	Reefs
Forest, enchanted	River, narrow
Forest, heavy	River, wide
Forest, impenetrable	Road
Forest, light	Salt flats
Forest, rain	Savanna
Forest, redwood	Scrub
Gardens, natural	Steppes
Glacier	Swamp
Hills, craggy	Talus
Hills, rolling	Town
Homestead	Tundra
Hot springs	Valley
Ice field	Village
Jungle	Woods
Karst	

Table 2: Campaign design outline

- I. Define goals
 - A. Consider number of players and length of campaign
 - B. Consider number of political and environmental areas
 - C. Decide on current state and political history of the world
- II. Detailing the campaign
 - A. Campaign size
 1. Decide on map area
 2. Decide on map scale
 3. Remember to include room for growth
 - B. Mapping
 1. Draw continental outline (small version)
 2. Add mountain ranges, hills, and island chains
 3. Add river systems, forest areas, and plains
 4. Expand map to a more detailed scale
 5. Decide on natural terrain types
 6. Create some fantasy terrain types
 7. Decide on complicated "optional" campaign elements
 - a. Weather
 - b. Climate
 - c. Calendar
 - i. Dry seasons
 - ii. Rainy seasons
 - iii. Storm seasons and types of storms
 - iv. Holy days
 - v. Festivals
 - d. High and low magic-potential areas
 8. Create civilizations
 - a. Decide what races should inhabit which map areas
 - b. Place cities
 - c. Determine countries
 - i. Determine borders
 - ii. Determine forms of government
 - d. Make general plans for "international politics"
 - e. Make general descriptions of leaders
 - C. World overview
 1. Decide on detailed overall world situation
 2. Create a history that leads to the present situations, keeping in mind:
 - a. Campaign focus
 - b. Politics
 - c. Your DMing style
- III. Review
 - A. Check your work for:
 1. Realism
 2. Fantasy realism
 - B. Question your entire campaign creation for:
 1. Consistency
 2. Quality
 3. Completeness



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(From page 4)

If not, will you set a precedent with this one?
Would you like me to end the letter here?

Stewart Tame
Kirtland, Ohio

Dear person,

First, what collection?
That's okay I didn't need a mirror to write it.
What hidden messages?

Yes.

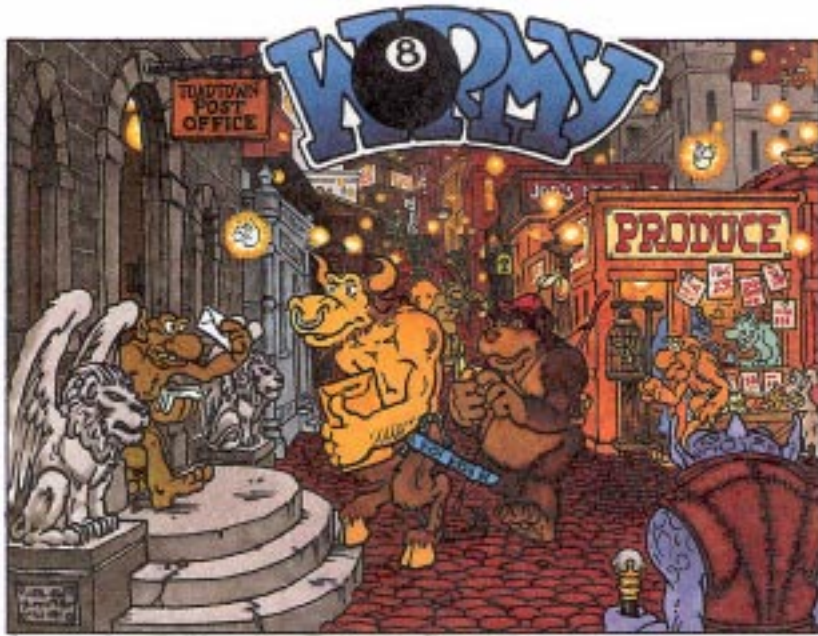
Maybe.

No.

No.

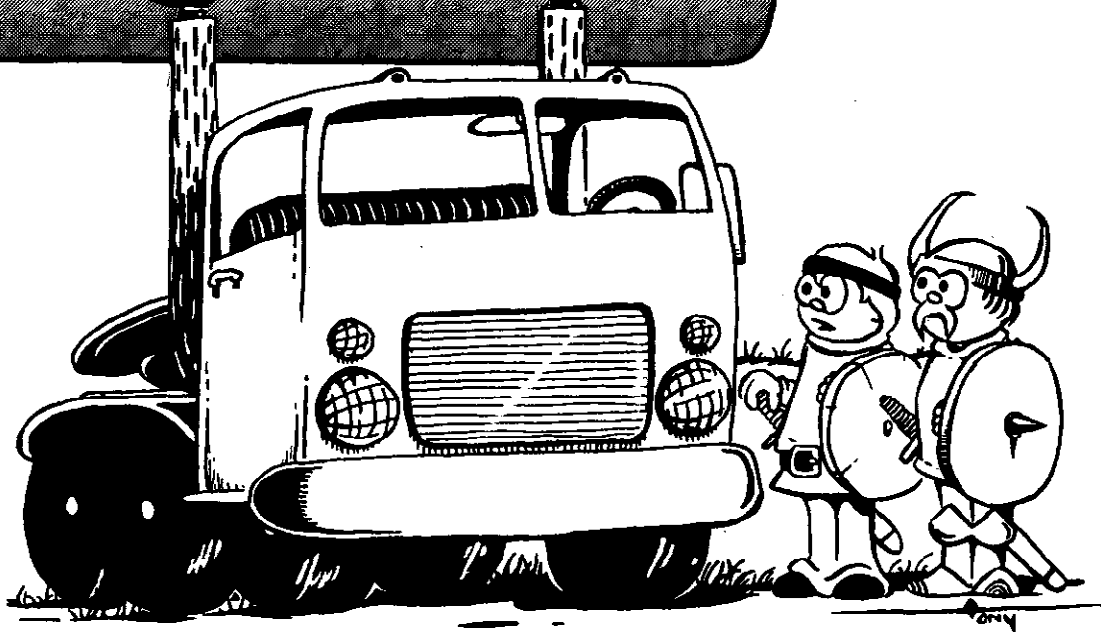
If you don't, I will.

- K M



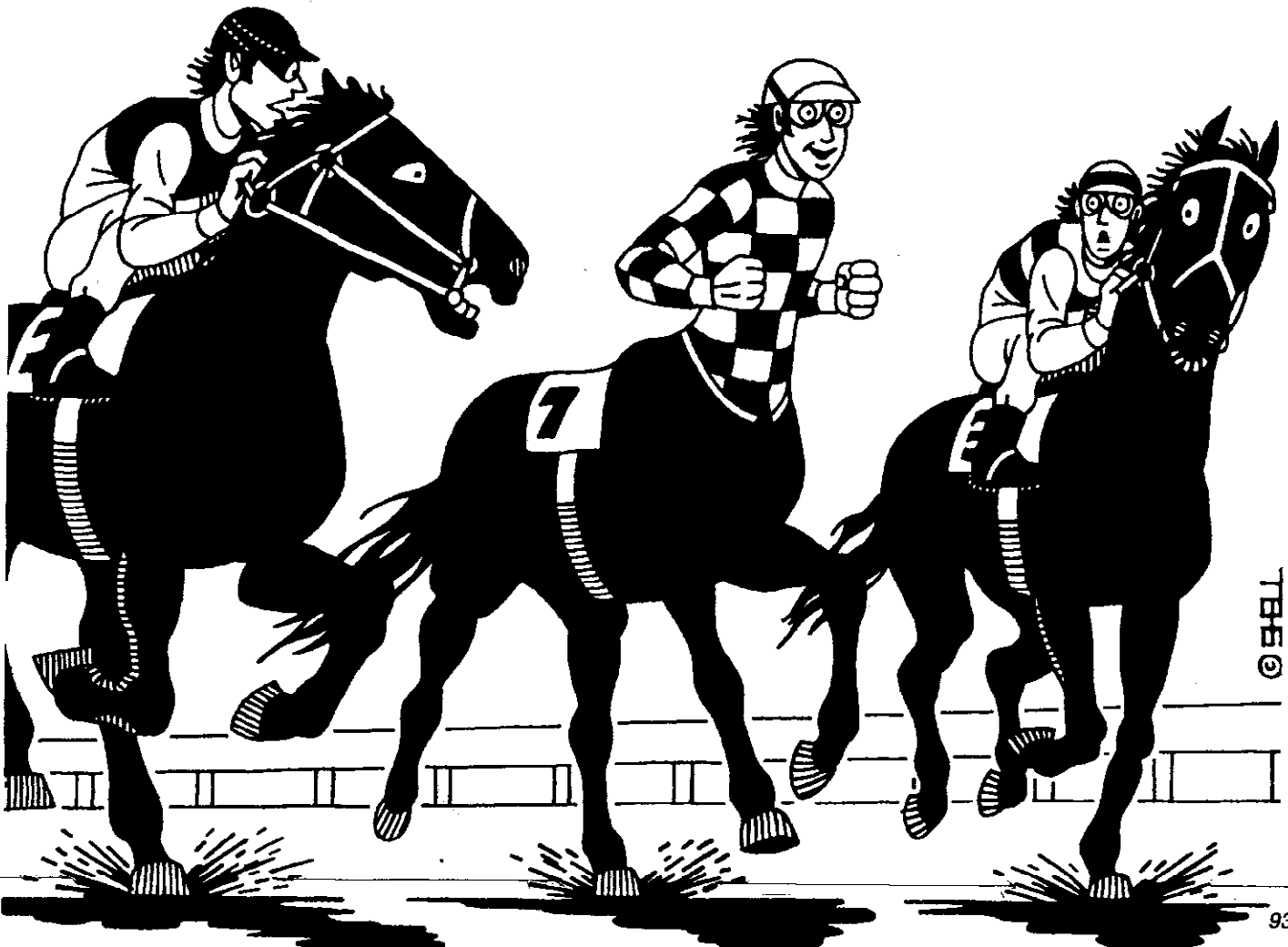


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AN' WHEN KING ROLF OFFERS ME PRINCESS PENELOPE'S HAND IN MARRIAGE... WOW!...

KNOCK KNOCK

I'LL GET THE DOOR.

HELLO GENTLEMEN, READY FOR THE BIG PARTY?

SURE!

AVEEARE, PENELOPE WANTS TO SEE YOU IN HER ROOM.

YES SIR. BLEEP!

MINUTES LATER...

DO YOU WANT TO SEE ME, PRINCESS?

LIKE, Y'KNAUW, SINCE YOU ARE, WAUOW, A GREAT HERO... I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU, LIKE, A ROYAL KISS!

KISS ME? WELL, IF YOU WISH, GO AHEAD.

AVEE- BABY, I WANT TO, LIKE, KISS YOUR LIPS, Y'KNAUW... SOOO, LET'S JUS' TAKE OFF THIS LIL' OL' HELMET... OK?

BLEEP! YOU CANNOT TAKE OFF MY HEAD!

OH YESS... LIKE, COME ON IN.

OH NAUO, AVEE, I WON'T TAKE YOUR HEAD OFF, Y'KNAUW, JUS' THE HELMET... LIKE THIS.

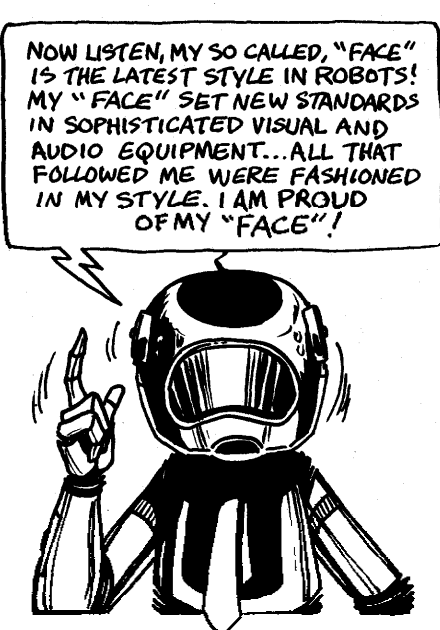
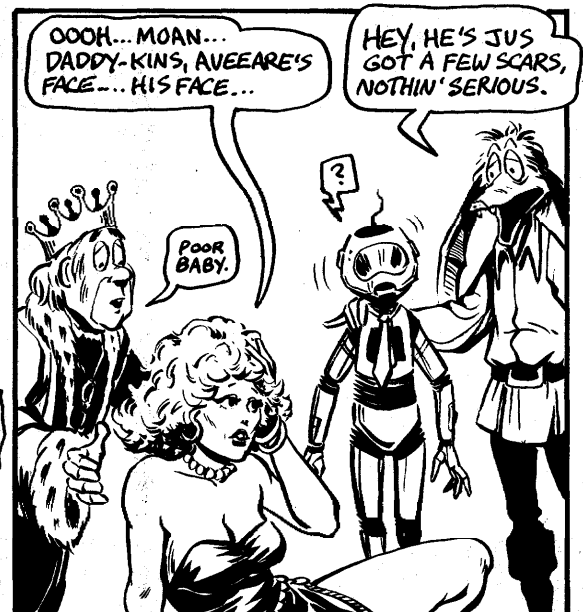
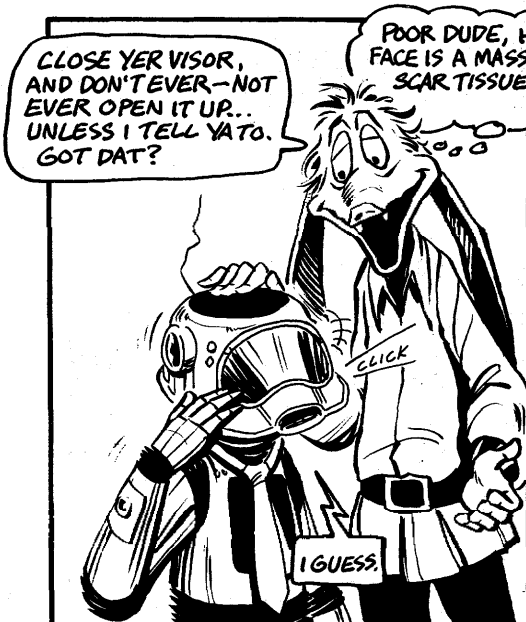
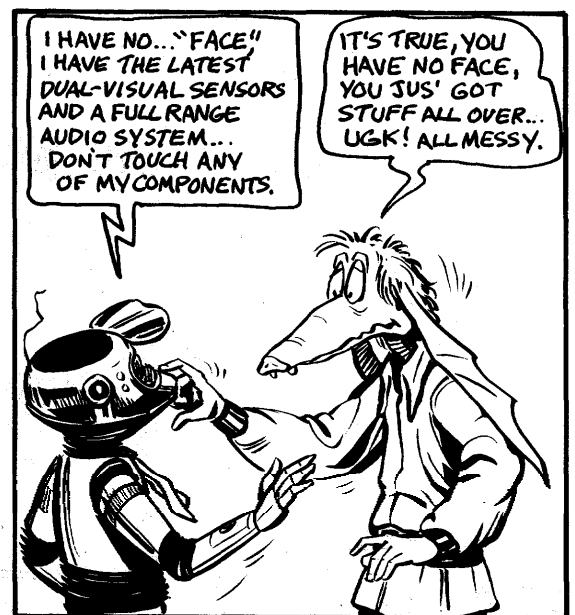
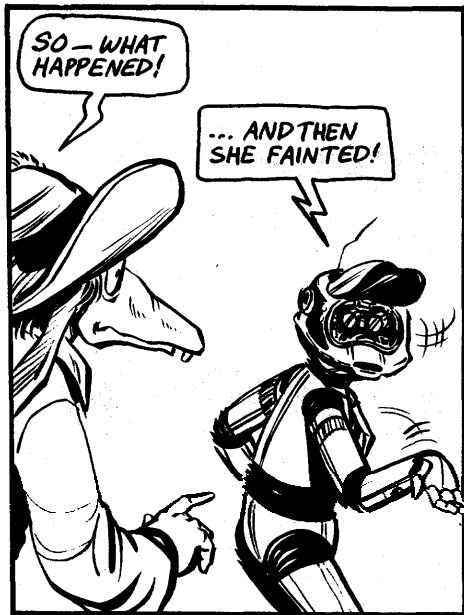
DO NOT DISASSEMBLE ME!! BLEEP!

MAN, LIKE, EASE UP... I THINK THE HELMET IS STUCK! DON'T WORRY AVEE, LIKE, I'M STRONG, Y'KNAUW!

BLOIP! GAG! BLEEP!

LIKE WAUOW, THIS IS ONE TIGHT FIT...

BLEEEEEEEPP!!



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